A WORD IN SEASON

To this Present

GENERATION.

OR

A SOBER AND SERIOUS

DISCOURSE

About the favorable, Signal and eminent Presence of the LORD with his PEOPLE, in their greatest Troubles, deepest Distresses, and most deadly Dangers.

WITH THE

Resolution of several Questions, concerning the DIVINE PRESENCE, as also the Reasons and improvements of this great and glorious Truth.

All tending to encourage Christians in the way of their Duty, in the face of all Afflictions, Oppositions, and Sufferings that they may meet with for Righteousness sake from the Serpents seed, or from Wolves in Sheeps-cloathing.

By THOMAS BROOKS, the Author of the *Golden Key* to open hidden Treasures.

But will God indeed dwell on the Earth? Behold the Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain thee, how much less this House that I have builded. 1 Kings 8.27.

Deus unus est, & ubique totus diffusus. Cyprian.

Maximilian the Emperour was so delighted with that Sentence of PAUL, *Si Deus nobiscum, If God be with us, who shall be against us*, that he caused it to be written upon the Walls in most rooms of his Palace.

LONDON,

Printed for *Dorman Newman*, at the Sign of the [illegible] in the *Poultrie*.

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PEOPLE,

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2. Tim. 4. 17.

Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me, that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear, and I was delivered out of the mouth of the Lion.

IN my Text you have three things that are most remarkable.

Preached in March and April, 1675.

First, you have *Paul's* commemoration of that singular experience that he had of the favourable presence of *Christ* with him, and of his strengthening of him. *Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me*, or παρεστη, *by me, and assisted me*, though I was deserted by men, yet I was ayded and assisted by *Christ*; though all men left me to shift for my self, yet the Lord stood by me, and strengthned me with wisdom, prudence, courage, and constancy, in the want of all outward encouragements, and in the face of all outward discouragements.

Acts 23. 11. 1 Tim. 4. 16. 2 Tim. 1. 15.

Secondly, here is the end for which the Lord stood by him, assisted, strengthned, and delivered him, *viz.* That he might preach the Gospel to the Nations. That he might have more time, and further opportunity, to spread abroad the everlasting Gospel among the Gentiles, whose Apostle he was. *Rome* at this time, was

Rom. 11. 13. Phil. 1. 22.

the

the Queen of the World, and in its most flourishing condition, people from all parts of the World flocke to *Rome*. Now when they should hear and see *Paul's* prudence, courage, constancy and boldness, in professing of *Christ*, and in preaching and professing the Gospel; even before that grand Tyrant, that monster of mankind *Nero*, they could not but be wrought upon, and the fame of the glorious Gospel could not but by this means be spread all the World over.

Calv. Te. Estius. &c.

Thirdly, here is the greatness of the danger, from which he was delivered; *viz.* *From the mouth of the Lyon.* Some Authors do conceive these words (*and I was delivered from the mouth of the Lyon*) to be a Proverbial speech, noting some eminent, present, devouring danger; I was delivered from the extremest hazard of death, even as a man rescued out of a Lyons mouth, and pull'd from between his teeth. Others more genuinly and properly by *the mouth of the Lyon*, do understand *Nero's* rage and cruelty, who for his potency in preying on the flock of *Christ*, is here fitly compared to a Lyon, which devoured and destroyed the flock of *Christ*. This cruel Lyon *Nero* put a world of Christians to death, and made a bloody Decree, That whosoever confessed himself a Christian, he should without any more a do, be put to death as a convicted enemy of mankind. *Tertullian* calleth him, The Dedicatour of the condemnation of Christians. This bloody Monster *Nero* raised the first bloody Persecution. To pick a quarrel with the Christians, he set the City of *Rome* on fire, and then charged it upon the Christians, under which pretense he exposed them to the fury of the People, who cruelly tormented them, as if they had been common burners and destroyers of Cities, and the deadly enemies of mankind; yea *Nero* himself, caused them to be apprehended and clad in wild beasts skins, and torn in pieces with Dogs; others were crucified; some he made bonefires off to light him in his night-sports. To be short, such horrid cruelty he used towards them,

Beza. A Lapide. Vide Euseb. hist. l. 2. c. 22.

Dedicator damnationis Christianorum. *Tertul.*

as caused many of their enemys to pity them: But God found out this bloody Persecutor at last, for being adjudged by the Senat an enemy to mankind, he was condemned to be wipt to death, for the prevention whereof he cut his own throat.

The words being thus briefly opened, the main point I shall insist upon is this, *viz.*

That when the People of God, are in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, then the Lord will be most favourably, most signally, and most eminently present with them.

The Schoolmen say that God is five wayes present. 1. In the Humanity of *Christ*, by hypostatical union. 2. In the Saints, by knowledge and love. 3. In the Church, by his essence and direction. 4. In Heaven by his Majesty and Glory. 5. In Hell, by his vindictive Justice.

Hemingius saith, There is a fourfold presence of God. 1. There is a presence of Power in all men, even in the Reprobates. 2. A presence of Grace only in the Elect. 3. A presence of Glory in the Angels and Saints departed. 4. An hypostatical presence of the Father with the Son. But, if you please you may take notice, that there is a sixfold presence of the Lord:

First, there is a general presence of God, and thus he is present with all Creatures; *Whither shall I flee from thy presence?* *Empedocles* the Philosopher said well, That God is a Circle, whose center is every where, and whose circumference is no where. God is included in no place, and excluded from no place, saith another, *Nemo est ubi, ubi non est Deus.* They could tell us that God is the soul of the World: and that as the soul is *Tota in toto, & tota in qualibet parte*, so is he, his eye is in every corner, &c. To which purpose they so pourtrayed their Goddess *Minerva*, that which way soever one cast his eye, shee always beheld him. Though Heaven be Gods Palace, yet it is not his prison. *Diana's* Temple was burnt down, when shee was busie at *Alexander's* birth

Psal. 139. 7. *Nunquam est Deus, &c. ubique est. Chrysost. in Col. 3. Hom. 5.*

God is higher than the Heaven, deeper than Hell, broader than the Earth, and more diffuse than the Sea. *Bern.*

Isa. 66. 1. Prov. 5. 21. Heb. 4. 13. Job 26. 6.

Math. 5. 45. Acts 17. 27, 28. Psalm 33 13, 14.

orb, and could not be at two places together, but God is present both in Paradise, and in the Wilderness at the same time. 1 *Kings* 8. 27. *But will God indeed dwell on the Earth, behold the Heaven, and Heaven of Heavens cannot contain thee, how much less this House that I have builded.* By the Heaven of Heavens is meant that which is by the learned called the Empyreal Heaven, where the Angels and the Saints departed do enjoy the glorious and beatifical vision of God, and it is called the Heaven of Heavens, both because it is the highest, and doth contain the other Heavens within its orb, and also by way of excellency, as the most holy place in the Temple is called the Holy of Holies, because it far surpasseth all the rest in splendour and glory. Jer. 23. 24 *Can any hide himself in secret places that I should not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill Heaven and Earth? saith the Lord.* Prov. 15. 3. *The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.* God is πανοπτης, *All-eye.* The poor Heathen could say, *Deus intimior nobis intimo nostro, God is nearer to us than we are to our selves.* Repletively he is every where, though inclusively no where. Job 34. 21. *For his eyes are upon the wayes of man, and he seeth all his goings.* V. 22. *There is no darkness, nor shadow of death where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.* Sinners shall never be able to shrond themselves, nor their actions from Gods all-seeing eye. The Rabbins put *Makom*, which signifies *Place*, among the names of God. *Buxtorf* brings them in expounding that Text in Esther 4. 14. *Deliverance shall arise from another Place*, that is from God, they called him Place, because he is in every place, though in the Assemblies of his Saints more eminently and gloriously. God is present with all his Creatures. 1. *Via productionis*, by raising them up. 2. *Via sustentationis*, by staying of them upon whom are his Family, and he feeds and clothes them. 3. *Via influxionis*, by giving unto them power of motion, man could neither live nor move, unless the Lord were with him. 4. *Via observationis*, by taking notice of them,

them; he observeth and marks both their persons and their actions, he sees who they are, and how they are employed. 5. *Via ordinationis*, by governing and ruling of them, and all their actions, to the service of his glory, and the good of his poor People. But this is not that presence that we are to discourse of. Acts 4. 25. to 29.

Secondly, there is a miraculous presence of *Christ*, and this some of the Prophets of old had, and the Apostles and others had in *Christ*'s time, and by vertue of this miraculous presence of *Christ* with them, they cast out Devils, healed diseases, and did many wonderful things. But this is not the presence that falls within the compass of that main point we purpose to speak to. Mat. 7. 22. Mark. 3. 15.

Thirdly, there is a relative presence of *Christ*, and that is his presence in his Ordinances, and with his Churches. Of this presence the Scripture speaks very largly. Exod. 20. 24. *In all places where I record my Name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.* Exod. 25. 8. *And let them make me a Sanctuary, that I may dwell amongst them.* Exod. 29. 45. *And I will dwell among the Children of Israel, and will be their God.* Levit. 26. 11. *And I will set my Tabernacle amongst you, and my soul shall not abhor you.* V. 12. *And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my People.* Psalm 76. 1. *In Judah is God known: his Name is great in Israel.* V. 2. *In Salem also is his Tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Sion.* Isa. 8. 18. *From the Lord of Hosts which dwelleth in mount Sion.* Psalm 9. 11. *Sing praises to the Lord which dwelleth in Sion.* See Psalm 46. 4. 5. Cant. 7. 5. Joel 3. 21. Zach. 2. 10. 11. cap. 8. 3. Ps. 135. 21.

The Churches are said to be the Temples, in which the Lord doth dwell, and the House of the living God, and the golden Candlesticks amongst which he doth walk. O how much do's it concern all the Churches to prize their Church-state, and to keep close together, and to walk suitable to that gracious presence of God, that shines in the midst of them! But this is not that presence that falls under our present consideration. 1. Cor. 3. 16, 17. 2 Cor. 6. 16. Heb. 3. 6. 1 Pet. 2. 5. Rev. 2. 1.

Fourthly, there is a Majestical and glorious presence

Job 16. 19. 2 Thes. 1. 9. Psalm 16. 11. 1 Tim. 6. 14, 15, 16. Rev. 3. 21.

of *Christ*, and thus he is said to be in Heaven. Psalm 2. 4. *He that sitteth in the Heavens will laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision.* Heb. 1. 13. *But to which of the Angels said he at any time, sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?* Cap. 9. 24. *For Christ is not entred into the holy Places made with hands, which are the figure of the true, but into Heaven it self, now to appear in the presence of God for us.* Not that Heaven is *circulus concludens*, a place wherein *Christ* is shut up, but *Palatium resplendens*, the Court (as it were) where his Majesty in acts of wisdom, and power, and mercy, and conjunction of grace and glory doth most of all appear. As the soul of man, though it be in every part of man; yet it doth principally appear and manifest it self in the heart and brain, so here. &c. *Monica*, *Austin*'s Mother, standing one day, and seeing the Sun shine, raised this meditation; *Oh if the Sun be so bright, what is the light of Christ's presence in glory!* But this is not the presence we design now to discourse of.

See Exod. 9. 14. Isa. 6., 9, 10. cap 64. 1, 2, 3, 4. Psal. 81. 12. 2 Thes. 2. 11, 12. Psalm 68. 2. Jer. 4. 26. Eze. 38. 20. Hab. 1. 13.

Fifthly, there is a Judicial or wrathful presence of the Lord, and thus he is present with wicked men, sometimes blinding of them, sometimes hardning of them, sometimes leaving of them to their own hearts lusts, sometimes giving them up to their own hearts lusts, sometimes filling their faces with shame, and their Consciences with terrours. He is Judicially present with wicked men, by a particular observation of their persons and wayes. *Psalm* 33. 13, 14. *Job* 34. 21, 22. He sees who they are, and how they are employed against his honor, his interest, his Saints, his wayes, and by a special detestation of their persons and wayes, &c. But this is not that presence that at this time falls under our consideration, and therefore

Is 8. 9, 10.

The compassionate Parent is most with the sick child so here.

Sixthly and lastly, there is a gracious, a favorable, a signal, or eminent presence of the Lord with his faithful People, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, as the Scriptures do every where evidence; Take a taste of some, *Gen.* 39. 2. And

Joseph's

Joseph's Master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the Kings prisoners were bound, and he was there in the prison, Verse 21. *But the Lord was with Joseph, and shew'd him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.* A prison keeps not God from his, witness the Apostles and Martyrs, whose prisons by Gods presence became Palaces, and their stocks a Musick-school. *Bradford*, after he was put in prison, had better health than before, and found great favour with his keeper, who suffered him to go whither he would, upon his promise to return, by such an hour to his prison again. If men knew by experience the sweet that is in suffering for *Christ*, they would desire with *Chrysostome*, if it were put to their choice, rather to be *Paul* a prisoner of Jesus Christ, than *Paul* rapt up in the third Heaven. *Basil* in his Oration for *Barlaam*, that famous Martyr, saith, He delighted in the close prison, as in a pleasant green meadow, and he took pleasure in the several inventions of tortures, as in several sweet flowers. *Luther* reports of that Martyr S. *Agatha*, that as she went to prisons and tortures, she said, she went to Banquets and Nuptials. The Sun enlightens the World, saith *Cyprian*, but he that made the Sun is a greater light to you in prison, &c. Fire, sword, prisons, famine are pleasure, they are all delightful to me, saith *Basil*. *Paul* rattles his chain, which he beares for the Gospel, and was as proud of it, as a woman of her ornaments, saith *Chrysostome*. *Paul* and *Silas* in a prison found more pleasure than pain, more joy than sorrow; and when they were whipt, it was with Rosemary branches, as I may say. *Paul* greatly rejoyced in his sufferings for *Christ*, and therefore often sings out, *I Paul a prisoner of Jesus Christ*, not I *Paul* wrapt up in the third Heaven; Christ shew'd his great love to him, in wrapping him up in the third Heaven, and he shew'd his great love to Christ in a cheerful suffering for him. *Eusebius* tells of one that writ to his Friend from a stinking Dungeon, and dated his Letter from my delicate Orchard. My *Glover* the

Acts 16.25.

Act. and Mon. f. 1489. ibid. 1437.

Eph. 6.20. 2 Tim. 1. 16. Act. 15.26, 29. Phil. 1. 7, 13, 14, 16. Colos 4.3, 18. 2 Tim. 2.9. &c.

Martyr weeping for joy of his imprisonment; And God forgive me (said Mr. *Bradford*, when a prisoner) my unthankfulness for this exceeding great mercy, that among so many thousands, he chuseth me to be one in whom he will suffer. I was carried to the Cole-house, saith Mr. *Philpot* the Martyr, where I with my fellows, do rouze together in the straw as chearfully, we thank God, as others do in their beds of down. *Philip*, Landgrave of Hesse, being a long time prisoner under *Charles* the Fifth, was asked what upheld him in his long imprisonment? He answered, that he felt the divine consolations of the Martyrs. Gen. 49. 23. *The Archers* (or as the Hebrew here hath it the *Arrow-masters*) *have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him.* These Arrowmasters were his barbarous Brethren that sould him, his adulterous Mistriss, that harlot-like hunted for his precious life, his injurious Master, that without any desert of his imprisoned him, the tumultuating Egyptians, that pined with hunger perhaps spake of stoning of him, and the envious Courtiers and inchanters that spake evil of him, before *Pharaoh*, to bring him out of favour, but by divine assistance, and Gods favourable presence, he proved too strong for them all. Ver. 24. *But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob*, &c. *Joseph* is likened to a strong Archer, that as his other enemies as archers shot at him, so his bow was stedfast, and his armes strong by the signal presence of God with him. Such an eminent presence of God had *Joseph* with him, that he never wanted courage, comfort, or counsel, when he was at the worst. The divine prosence will make a man stand fast and firm under the greatest pressures; it made *Joseph* use his bow against his adversaries. As *David* did his sling against *Goliah*, he slung, saith one, as if he had wrapt up God in his sling. Psalm 23. 4. *Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.* The presence of the Lord with his

A&M. & Mon. fol. 1633.

1 Sam. 30. 6. *Jun. us. Mercer.* Not that his arms were adorned with braceletes & gold, as the Chalde saith, &c.

2 Cor. 1. 9, 12.

Buchelter.

People

People in the most deadly dangers, fills their souls full of courage, confidence, and comfort. That darkness which comes upon a dying man, a little before he gives up the Ghost, is the greatest darkness; and yet let a Christian then have but God by the hand, and he will not fear the most hideous and horrid representations of death. Dan. 3. 24. *Then Nebuchadnezzar the King was astonied, and rose up in hast, and spake and said unto his Counsellers, did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the King, true O King,* Verse 25. *He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.* The presence of the Son of God turn'd the fiery Furnace into a garden of delights, a gallery of pleasure. This divine presence in the midst of fire and flame, kept them from fainting, sinning, and shrinking, and fill'd their souls with comfort, peace, ease, and heavenly refreshing. One of the Ancients rhetorically speaking to *Nebuchadnezzar*, who said, *He saw one like the Son of God*, whence came this (saith he) who told thee that this was the Son of God, what Law, what Prophet? he is not yet born into the world, and the similitude of him, that was to be born, is known to thee; whence came this? who told thee this, but the divine fire enlightening thee within, that whilest thou beholdest these three as thine enemies in the fire, thou mightest give testimony to the Son of God. This heathenish Prince look't upon the fourth person, as one like a Son of the Gods, or like some young God, most bright and glorious, exceeding fair and excelling in beauty, as if he were not of humane but of divine off-spring. But what ever notions or apprehensions *Nebuchadnezzar* had; we may very safely understand this fourth to be, as the words do literally bear, the very true Son of God, our Lord and Saviour, who is signally present with his People, in their greatest extremities, and most deadly dangers. Zach. 1. 8. *I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red Horse, and he*

Augustin.

he stood amongst the myrtle-trees that were in the bottom, and behind him were there red horses, speckled and white. The man riding upon the red Horse, is the Man Christ Jesus, 'tis the Captain of the Lords Host, and the Captain of our Salvation: Christ is here represented in his Kingly state, under the Type of a Man riding on a red Horse, and having his Royal Attendants; for under the Type of red Horses, speckled and white behind him, is represented his having Angels for Ministers, and all Creatures ready for every dispensation; whether sad, represented by red; or comfortable, represented by white; or mixed of mercy and judgment, represented by speckled Horses. Christ is here represented as a Man on horseback, ready to make out, or sally forth for the good of his People, when they are at the lowest: The low, afflicted, and suffering state of the Church, is fitly compared to Myrtle-trees, that grow in a shady grove, in vallies, and bottoms, and by waters sides: now when his People are in a very low condition, then Christ appears on horse-back, for his Peoples protection, and their Enemies confusion. Christ will be sure to lodge with his People when they are at lowest; when the Church is in danger Christ is not asleep, he is alwayes ready upon his red Horse, watching all opportunities and advantages, to shew his zeal and courage for his People, and his severity and fury against their Enemies. The Man that stood amongst the Myrtle-trees, *Verse* 10. is that Man Christ Jesus, whose special residence is with his People when they are in the most low, dangerous, and forlorn condition: no troubles, no distresses, no dangers can banish Christ from his People, or make him seek another lodging, *Isa.* 43. 2. *When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.* The Israelites went thorow the red Sea and were not drowned; and the three Children walked up and down in the fiery Furnace, and were not so much as singed:

1 Tim. 2. 5. Josh. 4. 14. Heb. 2. 10. Among the Romans the Crown, or Garland of those that did shout for victory, or ride in triumph was made of myrtle, Plin. lib. 15. cap. 29.

Dan. 3. 27.

singed: By fire and water we may well understand the various troubles, distresses, and dangers that may attend the People of God; now in all these various troubles, &c. the Lord will be signally present with them, to protect and defend, to secure and deliver them out of all their various troubles, their deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, 2 *Cor.* 4. 9. *Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed*: Persecuted by Men, but not forsaken by God; the Saints may be shaken not shivered; persecuted, not conquered; cast down, but not cast off. *Luther* speaking of his Enemies, saith, They may thrust me, but not throw me; shew their teeth, but not devour me; kill me, but not hurt me, &c. because of that favourable and signal presence of Christ that is with me. Now this is that presence of the Lord, that falls under our present consideration.

But for the further opening of this important point, let us a little enquire, how the Lord does manifest his favorable, his signal, his eminent presence to his People, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers? Now to this Question I shall give these twelve Answers.

First, The Lord does manifest his favorable, signal, and eminent presence with his People, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses and most deadly dangers, by raising their Faith to more than an ordinary pitch at such a time, *Exod.* 14. 10. *And when Pharaoh drew nigh the children of Israel lift up their eyes; and behold the Egyptians marched after them, and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord*; Verse 11. *And they said unto Moses, because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth of Egypt?* Verse 12. *Is not this the word, that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? for it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.* Thus you see their great troubles, deep distresses,

1.

The faithful cry unto God in their extremities, but the unbelievers became mad, Pelican.

streſſes and moſt deadly dangers, they having a Red Sea before them, and a cruel, bloody, and enraged Enemy juſt at the heels of them. Now in this extremity ſee to what a high pitch *Moſes* his Faith riſes; Verſe 13. *And Moſes ſaid unto the People, fear ye not, ſtand ſtill, and ſee the ſalvation of the Lord, which he will ſhew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have ſeen to day, ye ſhall ſee them again no more for ever.* He ſaith, they ſhall never ſee the Egyptians again, that is, in that manner as they ſaw them that day, inſulting againſt them and purſuing after them, as the Septuagint do well interpret it, ὃν τρόπον εωράκατε, *after what ſort ye have ſeen them*, for they ſaw them afterward, but drowned, and lying dead upon the ſhore, Verſe 14. *The Lord ſhall fight for you and ye ſhall hold your peace.* A ſtrong Faith will help a Chriſtian at a dead lift, though *Moſes* had received no particular promiſe how the Iſraelites ſhould be delivered, yet he reſted upon Gods general promiſe, before that he would get himſelf honour upon *Pharaoh* and his Hoſt. The Lord *ſhall fight for you, and ye ſhall be ſtill*; as if he had ſaid, ye ſhall be meerly paſſive, and do nothing at all towards the ſubduing of your Enemies, neither in words, nor deeds, the Lord ſhall fight againſt your Enemies, and defeat them himſelf by a ſtrong hand, and an outſtretched arm, compoſe your ſelves, act faith and hope in God, without doubting, murmuring, grudging, fainting, or fretting; for God deferreth his chiefeſt aid, until mans greateſt need, when the Enemy is higheſt Salvation is neareſt, when the danger is greateſt, the help of God is readieſt, as at this time they found it.

Vide Joſeph. lib. 2. cap. 6.

Exod. 14. 30.

2 Chron. 13. 3. *Abijah ſet the battel in aray, with an Army of valiant men of war, even four hundred thouſand choſen men: Jeroboam alſo ſet the Battel in aray againſt him, with eight hundred thouſand choſen men, being mighty men of valour:* Jeroboam had two to one; Verſe 7. *And there were gathered unto him vain men, the children*

of

of Belial, and have ſtrengthened themſelves againſt Reboboam the Son of Solomon, when Reboboam was young and tender-hearted and could not withſtand them. Reboboam was no warriour, he was no expert Prince in the uſe of Arms, he was but young (not in age) but in experience, policy, and valour, he was hen-hearted, he had no courage, no mettle: *Jeroboam* takes hold of theſe advantages and gathers eigth hundred thouſand *Racha's*, brainleſs fellows, light and empty, yoakleſs and maſterleſs perſons, men of no piety, civility, ingenuity, or common honeſty. Now ſee what a mighty ſpirit of Faith God raiſed in the children of *Judah*, Verſe 17. *And Abijah and his People ſlew them with a great ſlaughter: ſo there fell down ſlain of Iſrael five hundred thouſand choſen men.* A monſtrous and matchleſs ſlaughter, the greateſt number that ever we read ſlain in any battle: far beyond that of *Tamerlan*, when he took *Bajazet*, or *Ætius* the Roman Prefect, when he fought with *Attilas* and his Hunnes in the Fields of *Catalaunia*, where were ſlain on both ſides one hundred ſixty five thouſand. *Verſe* 18. *Thus the children of Iſrael were brought under at that time, and the children of Judah prevailed*, becauſe they relied upon the Lord God of their Fathers; Faith at a dead lift never miſcarrieth: God never has nor never will fail thoſe that place their confidence upon him in their greateſt dangers.

2 Chron. 12. 13. He was one and forty years old when he came to the Crown.

Eſther 4. 14. *For if thou altogether hold thy peace at this time, then ſhall there enlargement and deliverance ariſe to the Jews from another place, but thou and thy Fathers houſe ſhall be deſtroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the Kingdom for ſuch a time as this.* Their great trouble, their deep diſtreſs, and their moſt deadly danger you have in that 3. Eſther 13. *And the Letters were ſent by the poſts into all the Kings provinces, to deſtroy, to kill and to cauſe to periſh, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth moneth (which is the moneth Adar) and to take the ſpoil of them for a prey.* *Haman* that grand Infor-

Here are great aggravations of his cruelty, in that neither ſex nor age are ſpared; Rage and malice knows no bounds.

Informer, with his wicked crew, would have spoiled them of their lives and goods, but that they were prevented by a miraculous providence as you know; now in this deep distress and most deadly danger at what a rate doth *Mordecai* believe. [*For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement* (Heb. *respiration*) *and deliverance arise.* (*Heb.* Stand up as on its basis or bottom so as none shall be able to withstand it.) This *Mordecai* speaketh not by a spirit of prophecy, but by the power and force of his faith, grounded upon the precious promises of Gods defending his Church, hearing the cries of his People, arising for their relief and succour, and grounded upon all the glorious attributes of God, *viz.* his power, love, wisdom, goodness, and allsufficiency, *&c.* all which are engaged in the Covenant of grace, to save, protect, and secure his People in their greatest troubles and most deadly dangers. *Mordecai*'s faith in this black, dark, dismal day, was a notable faith indeed, and worthy of highest commendation. Faith can look through the perspective of the promises, and see deliverance at a great distance, salvation at the door; what though sense saith, Deliverance will not come, and what though reason saith, Deliverance cannot come: yet a raised faith gets above all fears, and disputes and sayes; Deliverance will certainly come, Redemption is at hand.

Num. 13. 30. *And Caleb stilled the People before Moses, and said, let us go up at once, and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it.* Cap. 14. 9. *Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the Land, for they are bread for us; their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us, fear them not.* The Spies by their lyes did what they could to daunt and discourage the People, by crying up the strength of the *Anakims*, and the impossibility of the conquest, these hollow-hearted hypocritical Spies blow hot and cold almost in a breath; First, they make a narrative of the fruitfulness of the Land, and presently they conclude, that it was a Land

Num. 13. 32, 33.

Num. 13. 27. to the 31.

that

that was not ſufficient to nouriſh the inhabitants, yea, a Land that did devour the inhabitants. Liars have no Iron memories. But now behold to what a mighty pitch *Caleb*'s faith is raiſed. [*Let us go up at once, and poſſeſs it, for we are able to overcome it.*] Or nearer the Hebrew, *Marching up, march up, ſubduing ſubdue.* Let us, ſaith believing *Caleb*, march up to the land of *Canaan* courageouſly, reſolutely, undauntedly, for the day is our own, the Land is our own, all is our own. [*They are bread for us,*] we ſhall make but a break-faſt of them, we ſhall eaſily and as ſurely root them out, and cut them down with our ſwords, as we cut the bread we eat. [*Their defence is departed from them.*] In the Hebrew it is, *Their ſhadow is departed from them*; the ſhadow you know guards a man from the ſcorching heat of the Sun. *Caleb* by faith, ſaw God with drawn from them, by the eye of his faith he lookt upon them as a people without a fence, a ſhadow, a guard, a covert, a protection; and therefore, as a people that might eaſily be ſubdued, and deſtroyed. His faith told him, that it was not their ſtrong Cities, nor their high walls, nor their ſons of *Anack*, that could preſerve, ſhelter, ſecure, or defend them, ſeeing the Lord had forſaken them, and would be no longer as a ſhadow or a ſhelter to them. [*And the Lord is with us,*] to make us victorious, to tread down our enemies, and to give us a quiet poſſeſſion of the good Land.

Verſe 32.

Pſalm 91. 1. Pſ. 121. 5, 6.

So *Dan.* 3. 16. *Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abednego anſwered and ſaid to the King: O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to anſwer thee in this matter.* Ver. 17. *If it be ſo, our God whom we ſerve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery Furnace, and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O King.* In the fiery Furnace they are protected by a divine providence, they eſcape death beyond all mens expectations, for the fire touched them not, neither could it burn during their abode in the Furnace, for God ſo fortified their bodies that they could not be conſumed by fire; which accident made them in great eſtimation with the King, for that he ſaw, that they were

Joſephus Antiq. p. 259, 260.

vertuous, and beloved of God, and for that cause they were highly honoured by him. Here is a fiery Furnace before them, and a proud, boasting, tyrannical, enraged Prince domineering over them, for not obeying his Idolatrous will. Now to what a mighty pitch is their faith raised? [*Our God whom we serve, is able to deliver us, and he will deliver us.*] Their faith was bottomed upon their propriety in God. [*Our God,*] and upon the power, providence, and all-sufficiency of God. [*Is able to deliver us,*] and upon the gracious readiness, and willingness of God. [*And he will deliver us out of thy hand, O King.*] When dangers are greatest, then God commonly raises the faith of his people highest, faith doth most and best for us, when we are at a dead list. It quenches the violence of fire, as the Apostle speaks, pointing at the faith of these three Children, or rather Champions; though now the fiery Furnace was heat seven times hotter, then it used to be at other times, yet such was the strength, and might, and power of their faith, that it so quenched the flames, that they had not one hair of their heads singed, nor their coats changed, nor the smell of fire found upon them; and thus the blessed Martyrs may be said by their faith, patience, and constancy to quench the violence of the fire, though their bodies were consumed to ashes in the fire. So *Dan.* 6. 16. *Daniel* is cast into the den of hungry, enraged Lions; innocent *Daniel* is exposed to the cruel paws, and hungry jaws of Lyons. This kind of capital punishment, was not unusual among the Babylonians, the Medes, and Persians, and among the Romans also, with whom it was a common saying in *Tertullian*'s time, Let the Christians be cast to the Lyons. The faces of the Lyons are stern, and their voices are terrible, they are roaring and ravening, they are greedy of their prey; they are vigilant and subtil, lying in wait to get their prey, they sleep little, and when they sleep it 's *apertis oculis*, *With open eyes*; they mind their prey much, and are cunning to catch it; the Lyon hides himself, and when

Heb. 11. 34.

Dan. 3. 27.

Amos 3. 8.

Psalm 17. 12.

when the prey comes near he ſuddenly ſurpriſes it: they are proud and ſtately, they go alone, they eat not with the Lyonneſs, much leſs with other creatures, they will not ſtoop to any, or turn away from any, they do what they liſt; they are moſt cruel, bloody, devouring creatures; they have terrible claws, ſharp teeth, and are ſtrong and mighty to cruſh and break the bones; and it is very dangerous to meddle with Lyons. Num. 24. 9. *He layeth down as a Lyon, as a great Lyon, who ſhall ſtir him up?* Lyons if offended and provoked, are very revengful; in the hunting or taking of Lyons, the Lyon obſerves who wounds him, and on him if poſſible he will be revenged. *Ælian* tells of a Bear that came into a Lyons den, and bit the whelps ſhe found there; the Lyon returning, the Bear to ſhift for her ſelf got up into a high tree, the Lyoneſs watch'd at the foot of the tree: the Lyon ranged abroad in the woods, and meets with a man that had an axe, and us'd to fell trees; this man the Lyon brings to the den, ſhew'd him the wounded whelps, directs him to the tree where the Bear was, which he cut down; the Bear being torn in pieces, the man was ſafely diſmiſt. By theſe hints we may gueſs at the deadly danger, that *Daniel* was in. Some Writers tell us, that if a cloth be caſt upon the eyes of a Lyon to cover them, he will not hurt a man. 2. Or if he be full. *Joſephus*, to illuſtrate the Hiſtory, ſaith, that theſe Princes pleaded before the King, ſaying, that the Lyons were full and gorged, and therefore they would not touch *Daniel*; which he hearing being diſpleaſed with their injurious malice, ſaid, that the Lyons ſhould now be fed, and then they caſt in to ſee, when they were gorged, whether they could likewiſe eſcape; but this being done they were ſuddenly deſtroyed, before they came to the bottom of the den. To what a fatal end came theſe Informers? as to their wives and children, that were caſt into the den of Lyons; it is moſt probable, that they were acceſſary to that wicked conſpiracy againſt *Daniel*, by ſtirring up and provoking their Husbands and

Prov. 30. 3. Nah. 2. 12. 2 Kin 17. 6. Prov. 28. 15 1 Pet. 5. 8.

Ariſtot. Pliny, Pererius.

Joſephus Antiq. pag. 262, 263.

Dan. 6. 24.

and Fathers, to engage all their power, interest, and policy against him, and never to suffer a poor captive to be advanced in honor and dignity above them; and how just and righteous a thing was it with God, that they who had plotted together, and contrived together, the ruine and destruction of a holy innocent person, that these should suffer together, and go to the den together, and be torn in pieces together. Sinners look to your selves: if you will sin with others, you must expect to suffer with others. 3. Or if a man hath been beneficial to him. 4. Or if a man lyeth prostrate before him, in the manner of a supplicant; but *Daniel* was not safe, he was not secured by any of these meanes, but God secured him in the midst of these dreadful dangers by the ministry of an Angel. [*My God hath sent his Angel, and hath shut the Lyons mouths, that they have not hurt me*, Dan. 6. 22.] Others say, that God secured *Daniel*, by taking away the Lyons hunger from them, at that time, and by causing in them a satiety. And some tell us, that God secured him, by raising such a phantasy in the Lyons that they looked upon *Daniel*, not as a prey, but as on one, that was a friend unto them. But now in the midst of this dreadful danger, how doth *Daniel*'s faith sparkle and shine, Ver. 23. *Then was the King exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den; So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.* *Daniel* in a fiery Furnace, looks upon God as his God, in the midst of the flames he acts faith upon the power of God, the promises of God, &c. Of all living creatures Lyons are most fierce, cruel, and irresistible, and yet such was the strength and force of *Daniel*'s faith, that it stopped their mouths; though *Daniel* was but one man, yet such was the power of his faith, that it stopt the mouths of many Lyons. As *Luther* says of prayer, so may I say of faith; it hath a kind of omnipotency in it, its able to do all things, *est quedam omnipotentia precum*. Thus you see by these famous

See Heb. 11. 33. Judg. 14. 6, 1 Sam. 17. 34.

mous instances to what a mighty pitch the Lord has raised the faith of his People, when they have been in the greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers. And this is the first way wherein the Lord doth manifest his favourable, his signal, his eminent presence with his People, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers. But,

Secondly, the Lord doth manifest his favourable, his signal, his eminent presence with his People in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, by his teaching and instructing of them, Psalm 94. 12. *Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy Law.* This divine presence turns every lash into a happy lesson. In this Psalm the holy Ghost useth six arguments to prove, that a man is blest who is chastened; First, because he is instructed by being afflicted as here. 2. Because the end why God layes affliction on his People is to give them rest, from the dayes of adversity, *Verse* 13. 3. Until the pit be digged for the wicked in the same Verse, until the cold grave hold his body, and hot hell hold his soul. 4. Because God will support them under all their afflictions, when God casteth his People into the Furnace of afflictions, his everlasting armes shall be underneath them; though God may cast down his People, yet he will never cast off his People. 5. Because there shall be a glorious restauration, Ver. 15. *Judgment shall return unto righteousness.* 6. Because all the upright in heart shall follow it, in the same Verse, *viz.* in their affections they are carried out after it, carnestly desiring that dear day, when God will unriddle his providences, and clear up his proceedings with the sons of men. *Jerom* writing to a sick friend, hath this expression: I account it a part of unhappiness not to know adversity, I judge you to be miserable, because you have not been miserable. *Demetrius* saith, nothing seems more unhappy to me, than he to whom no adversity hath happned. *Impunitas securitatis mater, virtutum noverca, Religionis virus, tinea sanctitatis*; Freedom from punish-

Feri Domine, feri, said Luther, *strike while thou pleasest Lord, only to thy correction, Add instruction, ut quod noceat, doceat.*

Bern.

ment

ment is the mother of security, the stepmother of virtue, the poyson of Religion, the moth of holiness. It was a speech of a German Divine in his sickness, In this disease (saith he) I have learned how great God is, and what the evil of sin is, I never knew to purpose what God was before, nor what sin meant before; Gods corrections are our instructions, his lashes our lessons, his scourges our schoolmasters, his chastisements our advertisements; and to note this the Hebrews and Greeks both express chastening and teaching by one and the same word מוסר musar παιδεία, because the latter is the true end of the former, according to that in the Proverb, *Smart makes wit, and vexation gives understanding.* Job 36.8. *And if they be bound in fetters, and be holden in cords of affliction.* Verse 9. *Then he sheweth them their work, and their transgressions that they have exceeded.* Verse 10. *He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity.* Sanctified afflictions open mens ears to discipline, and turn them from iniquity, which is a piece of learning that a Christian can never pay too dear for; Affliction is *verus Scripturæ commentarius, An excellent comment upon the Scripture*; Afflictions make way for the word of the Lord to come to the heart. *Bernard* had a brother of his, who was a riotous and prophane Soldier; *Bernard* gives him many good instructions, and admonitions, &c. but his brother slighted them, and made nothing of them; *Bernard* comes to him, and puts his hand to his side, One day (saith he) God will make way to this heart of yours by some spear or launce: and so it fell out; for going into the wars, he was wounded, and then he remembers his brothers instructions and admonitions, and then they got to his heart, and lay upon it to some purpose. Job 33.16. *Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction. Oculos quos peccatum claudit, pœna aperit, The eyes that sin shuts, afflictions open.* The cross opens mens eyes, as the tasting of honey did *Jonathan's*. By correction God seales up instruction, God sets on the

Gaspar Olevianus.

Schola crucis, schola lucis. Isa.26.9. Prov.3.12,13. cap. 6 23.

Affliction sanctified, is *Lex pratica*, a practical Law.

Greg.

one

one by the other, as when a Schoolmaster would have a lesson learned indeed, he sets it on with a whipping. As *Gideon* taught the Elders of the city and the men of *Succoth* with the thornes and briars of the wilderness, so God teaches his People by affliction many a holy and happy lesson. By afflictions, troubles, distresses, and dangers, the Lord teaches his People to look upon sin as the most loathsome thing in the world, and to look upon holiness as the most lovely thing in the world. Sin is never so bitter, and holiness is never so sweet, as when our troubles are greatest, and our dangers highest. By afflictions the Lord teaches his People to sit loose from this world, and to make sure the great things of that other world. By affliction God shewes his People the vanity, vexation, emptiness, weakness, and nothingness of the Creatures; and the choiceness, preciousness, and sweetness of communion with himself, and of interest in himself. Christ though he knew yet learned he obedience, by the things which he suffered, that is, he shewed obedience more than before; Not as if Christ were to go to School to learn, or as if by certain acts he were to fit himself for obedience; he did not learn that which he knew not before, but did that which he did not before; he that was put upon the tryal of his obedience, he came to know by experience, what a hard matter it was thus to obey God. By Gods favourable presence a man comes to learn many lessons in a time of adversity, which he never learned in a day of prosperity: for we are like idle boyes and bad scholars, that learn best when the rod is over us. *Hezekiah* was better upon his sick bed, than when he was shewing of his treasures to the Ambassadours of the King of *Babylon*; and *David* was a better man, when he was in his wilderness condition, than when he set upon his Royal throne; the Jews are ever best, when in the worst condition; the Athenians would never mend tell they were in mourning. When *Munster* lay sick, and his friends asked him how he did, and how he felt himself? he pointed to his

Judg. 8. 16.

Heb. 5. 8. παδὴ ματα μαδὴ ματα, Nocumenta documenta,

Isa. 39. 1, 2, 3, 4. 5.

Psalm 30. 6, 7.

sores and ulcers (whereof he was full) and said, These are Gods gems and jewels wherewith he decketh his best friends, and to me they are more precious than all the gold and silver in the world. Here, as that Martyr phrased it, we are but learning our *A. B. C.* and our lesson is never past Christs Cross, and our walking is still home by weeping cross. Usually men are worst in a prosperous condition; in a prosperous condition God speaks to us, and we mind him not. *I spoke to thee in thy prosperity, but thou wouldest not hear: and this hath been thy manner from thy youth upwards.* Pope *Martin* reported of himself, that whilst he was a Monk, and lived in the Cloister, he had some evidences for Heaven, when he was a Cardinal, he began to fear and doubt, but after he came to be Pope, he utterly despaired. The Lord never shews more of his favourable, signal, and eminent presence, than by teaching of his People many gracious and Gospel lessons by their great troubles, deep distresses, and most deadly dangers. But,

Jer. 2. 21.

Thirdly, the Lord doth manifest his favourable, his signal, his eminent presence with his People, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, by raising, strenthening, and acting, their suffering graces, *viz.* their faith, hope, love, patience, prudence, courage, boldness, zeal, constancy. Thus in the Text, *The Lord stood by me, and strengthened me.* He put new life, and strength, and vigour into all my graces; although there are habits of grace alwayes resident in the hearts of the Saints, yet those habits are not alwayes in exercise. The habits of grace cannot act of themselves, there must be renewed strength imparted to set them on work. *Make me to go in the path of thy Commandments, for therein do I delight.* Though *David* had a spirit of new life within him, yet he could not actually walk in the path of Gods precepts, till by an additional force he was set a going. Cant. 4. 16. *Awake, O North wind, and come thou South wind, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.* By the garden we may safely under-

Isay 64. 7.

Psalm 119. 35. Christ is the dispenser of winds, both cold & hot, moist and dry, binding and opening, North & South, and therefore what wind soever blower, it shall blow good to his People.

underſtand a ſanctified ſoul, and by the ſpices in this garden we may underſtand the ſeveral graces planted in the ſoul; now theſe ſpices can never flow out, and ſend forth their fragrant ſmell, till the North and South wind blowes upon them. Habitual grace cannot operate and dilate, and put forth it ſelf into exerciſe, till by the concurrent preſence and aſſiſtance of Chriſt it is educed into act; no Saint can act that grace he hath received by his own ſtrength, without the preſence and aſſiſtance of Chriſt, 1 Cor. 15. 16. *But by the grace of God, I am what I am; and his grace, which was beſtowed upon me, was not in vain, but I labour more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God, which was with me.* He does not ſay, the grace of God which was in me, that habitual grace which I had: but, The grace of God which was with me. So then it is not the ſtrength of habitual grace, that will carry a man through doing or ſuffering work, but the auxiliary, the aſſiſting, the conquering grace of Jeſus Chriſt; it is his grace with us, more than his grace in us. So John 15. 5. *Without me ye can do nothing.* Ye that are my Diſciples, ye that have the ſpirit of Jeſus Chriſt, *Without me ye can do nothing*; the habits of grace, the actings of grace, and the perfecting of grace are all from Jeſus Chriſt. It is more emphatical in the original, for there you have two negatives, cannot, do nothing; He do's not ſay, Without me ye cannot do many things; but, *Without me ye can do nothing*; nor he do's not ſay, Without me ye can do no great thing; but, *Without me ye can do nothing*; nor he do's not ſay, Without me ye can do no difficult thing; but, *Without me ye can do nothing*; nor he do's not ſay, Without me ye can do no ſpiritual thing; but, *Without me ye can do nothing.* What ever a Saint may do, by the power of gifts, or habits of grace received, yet he can do nothing in a lively ſpiritual acceptable way, without the preſence of Chriſt, without a conſtant dependence upon Chriſt, without a ſweet and ſpecial communion and fellowſhip with Chriſt, if we can-

χωρὶς ἐμοῦ, ſeparate from me, or apart from me. Eraſm. ſine me. Beza, ſeorſim a me. Members divided from the head, cannot live, ſo here.

Acts 17. 28. not put forth a natural action without him, for in him, we live, move, and have our being; how much less can we perform a spiritual action, in a spiritual manner, Cant. 1. 12. without his presence and assistance? Let the King sit but at his table, and then our spicknard will send forth a sweet smell; that is, let Jesus Christ be but present with us, and then our graces, which are compared to spicknard will send forth a sweet smell; sitting at the table with King Jesus, intimakes the sweetest friendship 1 Kings 10. 8. and fellowship with him. It was held a great honour and happiness to stand before *Solomon*, what is it then to sit with Christ at his table? [*My spicknard sendeth forth the smell thereof,*] that is, My faith is actuated, and all my other graces are exercised and increased; Christs presence puts life into all our graces. *Fear thou not, for I am* Isa. 41. 10. Luke 21. 14, 15. *with thee, be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.* 2 Cor. 12. 10. *When I am weak then am I strong.* When I am weak in my self, then am I strong in Christ. If the Sun shine upon the Mary-gold, Mal. 4. 2. how soon do's the Mary-gold open, so when the Sun of righteousness do's but shine upon a Christians graces, how do they open and act! To shew how the presence of Christ has acted the faith, love, courage, boldness, and patience, &c. of the Saints in the Old and New Testament, the primitive Christians and the Martyrs, in the latter ages of the world, when they have been in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, would take up more than a little time, besides in my other writings, I have opened these things more fully to you, and to them I must refer you. And therefore,

Fourthly, the Lord doth manifest his favourable, signal, and eminent presence with his People, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, by laying a Law of restraint upon every wicked man, and by bridling and checking their fury and insolency, that they shall not add afflictions to the afflicted as

as otherwiſe they would; as he did upon *Laban*, Gen. 31. 24. *And God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and ſaid unto him, take heed that thou ſpeak not to Jacob, either good or bad.* Verſe 29. *It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt; but the God of your Fathers ſpake unto me yeſter night, ſaying, take thou heed that thou ſpeak not to Jacob either good or bad.* See what a law of reſtraint God laid upon *Eſau*, Gen. 33. 1, 2, 3, 4. and upon *Abimelech*, Gen. 20. 6, 7, 8, 17, 18. and upon *Benhadad*, 1 Kings 20. 1, 10, 29, 30. and upon *Haman*, as you may ſee by comparing the 3. and 6. chapters of *Eſther* together; and upon *Pharaoh*, Exod. 15. 9, 10. and upon *Senacherib*, Iſa. 37. 28, 29, 33, 34, 35, 36. and upon *Herod*, Acts 12. *Maximinus* ſet forth a proclamation engraven in braſs, for the utter aboliſhing of Chriſt and Religion: he was eaten up of lice. *Valens*, being to ſubſcribe an order for the baniſhment of *Baſil*, was ſmitten with a ſudden trembling of his hand, that he could not ſubſcribe the order; afterwards he was burned to death by the Goths.

History of the Council of Trent pag. 417.

Domitian, the author of the ſecond perſecution againſt the Chriſtians, having drawn a catalogue of the names of ſuch as he was to kill, in which was the name of his own Wife, and other Friends; upon which he was by the conſent of his Wife, ſlain by his own houſhold ſervants with daggers in his privy Chamber; his body was buried without honour, his memory curſed to poſterity, and his Arms and Enſignes where thrown down and defaced. *Julian* vowed to make a ſacrifice of the Chriſtians upon his return from the wars, but in a Battel againſt the Perſians, he was deadly wounded, and throwing his blood in the air, in a high contempt of Chriſt, he dyed with that deſperate blaſphemous expreſſion in his mouth, *Viciſti tandem Galilæe, Thou Galilean haſt overcome me.*

Felix, Earl of *Wurtenburg*, was a great perſecutor of the Saints, and did ſwear, that ere he dyed he would ride up to the ſpurs in the blood of the Lutherans; but

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the very same night, wherein he had thus sworn and vowed, he was choaked in his own blood.

The Judgments of God were so famous and frequent upon the persecutors of the Saints in *Bohemia*, that it was used as a proverb among the Adversaries themselves, That if any man were weary of his life, let him but attempt against the Piccardines (so they called the Christians) and he should not live a year to an end. By these short hints you may see, that all along God has made good, that Word, that is more worth than a world: *Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, and the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.* Heb. *Shalt thou gird*, that is curb, and keep within compass; or as the Greek hath it, *It shall keep holy day to thee*, that is, cease from working, or acting outwardly, how restless soever it be within. [*The remainder of wrath shall thou restrain,*] that is, those that are left alive of thy wrathful enemies, that have still any malice against thy People, thou wilt curb and restrain, and not suffer their wrath to be so great as formerly; or if they go about to recruit their forces, and to set again upon thy People, thou wilt set such bounds to their wrath, that they shall not accomplish their desires, nor shall they proceed one step further, than shall make signally for thy glory and thy Peoples good, so some carrie the words. The more eager and furious the enemies are against Gods People, the more honour and glory will God get in protecting and securing his People, and in girding, binding, and tying up their enemies: were it not for this favourable, signal, and eminent presence of God with his People, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers. Wicked men would still be a multiplying of their sorrows increasing their troubles, and adding of burden to burden; 'tis this favorable presence of God, that binds wicked men over to their good behaviour, and that chaines them up from doing that mischief, that they design and intend. But,

Psalm 76, 10. Heb. *Gird*, that is, keep it within compass as with a Girdle.

Fifthly, The Lord does manifest his favorable, signal and

and eminent presence with his People, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, by guiding and leading them into those paths and wayes, which make most for their own peace and quiet, safety and security, contentation and satisfaction, happiness here and blessedness hereafter. Deut. 32. 10. *He found him in a desert land and in the wast howling wilderness: he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.* A Wilderness condition is, you know, a condition of straits, wants, deep distresses, and most deadly dangers; now when his People were in this condition, he instructs them by his words and works, and he takes them by the hand (as I may say) and leads them with all care, tenderness, gentleness, and sweetness, as a man would do a poor helpless Infant which he should find in a desert, in a wast howling wilderness. God never left leading of his People, till he had brought them at last through the wilderness, to the land of *Canaan*. Ah this leading presence of God turns a wilderness into a Paradise, a desert into a *Canaan*: let a Christians troubles, distresses and dangers be never so many or never so great, yet as long as he has the guiding presence of God with him, he is safe from danger in the midst of dangers; *the fire shall not burn him, nor the waters overflow him*, Isa. 43. 2. Psalm 107. 4. *They wandred in the wilderness in a solitary way, they found no City to dwell in.* Verse 5. *Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them:* Verse 6. *Then they cried unto the Lord, in their troubles, and he delivered them out of their distresses.* Here you see their great troubles, deep distresses, and most deadly dangers; and now God gives them his hand, Verse 7. *And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a City of habitation*; that is to a state of settlement say some, to *Jerusalem* say others; or to that *City which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God*, saith another. In that 3d. Psalm you may see *David's* great troubles, deep distresses, and most deadly dangers: Verse 3. *When I kept silence my bones waxed old, through*

Exod. 13. 21, 22. Isa. 63. 12, 13, 14. Psal m 5. 8. The Apple of the eye is the tenderest piece of the tenderest part. Heb. *Ishon* of *Ish*, as *pupilla* of *pupa*, because therein appears the likeness of a little man, or because a man is to be prized above all other Creatures, as so God esteemeth his people above all the world, Heb. 11. 38.

Heb. 11. 10.

through my roaring all the day long, Verse 4. *For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me, my moisture is turned into the drought of summer, Selah:* But will God be his guide now? O yes, Verse 8. *I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.* Let the hand of the Lord be never so heavy upon a person, yet the presence of God guiding and instructing of him, will keep him from utter fainting and sinking under that hand. When the People of God are in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, he leads and guides them, 1. into supernatural wayes, *Prov.* 15. 24. *The way of life is above to the Wise.* He hath his feet where other mens heads are, and (like an heavenly Eagle) delights himself in flying high. 2. Into good wayes, *Jerem.* 6. 16. 3. Into strait and strict wayes, *Mat.* 7. 14. Hence they are called right or straight paths, which lie betwixt two extremes; or if you will, which directly lead you to the view of Heaven: they are paths which lie level with the rule, and with the end, a man may see Salvation and Heaven at the end of them. 4. Into pleasant wayes, *Prov.* 3. 17. *Her wayes are wayes of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace*; such as were those of *Adam* before his fall, strawed with roses, and paved with peace; some degree of comfort, pleasantness & peace follows every good action, as heat accompanies fire, as beams and influences issue from the Sun. 5. Into right paths, *Prov.* 4. 11. *I have taught thee in the way of wisdom: I have led thee in right paths.* Hosea 1. 9. *The wayes of the Lord are right and the righteous shall walk in them:* The wayes of his will, the wayes of his Word, and the wayes of his worship are all right wayes, they carry us on in a straight line unto a right end. 6. Into old and ancient wayes, *Jer.* 6. 16. *Ask for the old paths, where is the good way and walk therein, and ye shall find rest to your souls*, Jerem. 18. 15. *They have caused them to stumble in their way from the ancient paths.* The wayes of holiness are of the greatest, highest, and ancientest antiquity; the first wayes of *Adam*

Isa. 30. 21. Psalm 73. 24.

Psalm 25. 9, 12. Psalm 5. 8.

dam were wayes of holiness; the wayes of sin are of a later Edition, than the wayes of holiness; God stampt his Image of holiness upon Man, before ever Satan assayed to tempt him: holiness is of the ancientest house, of the greatest antiquity, sin is but an upstart, holiness is the first born: the way of holiness is the eldest way, the way of holiness is gray-headed, and of ancientest institution, all other wayes are but of yesterday, they are but new wayes to the wayes of holiness. The stamp of Antiquity upon many things is a praise and an honour to them, as old gold, old friends, old manuscripts, old monuments, old scars, and old holiness; the stamp of Antiquity upon the wayes of holiness, is the praise and honour of the wayes of holiness. 7. Into paths of righteousness, *Psalm* 23. 3. *He leadeth me in paths of righteousness for his names sake*; or in plain, smooth, easie paths, or in sheeps-tracks, wherein I may walk unwearisedly and unblamably; herein he alludes to the Shepherds care in leading his sheep gently, in fair and and plain wayes, and not through deep mire, brambles, and briars, or over craggy wayes, that must needs be hard and troublesome for them to go in: The word here used is Metaphorical; sometimes respecting the blind, who cannot walk without a guide; sometimes little or weak children, who cannot go without a leader; and here the weak and wandring sheep, which stand in need of the Shepherd, to go in and out before them. 8. Into paths of Salvation, *Acts* 16. 17. *These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.* 9. Into wayes of truth, 2 *Pet.* 2. 2. *And many shall follow their pernicious wayes, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.* [*The way of truth*] that is the true Christian Religion revealed from heaven, which shews the way to true happiness, to Eternal salvation. 10. Into wayes of uprightness, *Prov.* 2. 13. *Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the way of darkness.* Now when the People of God are in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most

deadly dangers, the Lord by leading them 1. Into supernatural wayes. 2. Into good wayes. 3. Into strict and straight wayes. 4. Into pleasant wayes. 5. Into right wayes. 6. Into old and ancient wayes. 7. Into righteous wayes. 8. Into wayes of salvation. 9. Into wayes of truth; and 10. Into wayes of uprightness does gloriously manifest his favourable, his signal, and his eminent presence with them. There is nothing below a mighty presence of God, that can enable a Christian (especially when he is under great troubles, and in deep distresses, and most deadly dangers) to do these five things: 1. To approve of the wayes of God. 2. To chuse the wayes of the Lord. 3. Highly to prize them. 4. To delight and take pleasure in them. 5. To walk in them and to keep close to them; and yet in all these five things the Lord doth greatly and graciously help his poor People, when they are as it were in the very mouth of the Lion. But

6. Sixthly, The Lord doth manifest his favourable presence, his signal and eminent presence with his People, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, by encouraging, imboldning, animating and hearming up his People, in the midst of all their troubles, distresses and dangers, and by putting new life, spirit, and mettle into them, when they are even in the very mouth of the Lion: *Josh.* 1. 6. *Be strong and of a good courage.* Verse 7. *Only be thou strong and very courageous.* Verse 9. *Be strong and of a good courage: be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee, whithersoever thou goest.* *Joshua* was a sword-man as well as a book-man, he had his name changed from *Oshea* to *Joshua*, from let God save, to God shall save. Christ will never want a Champion, to stand up for his Church; if *Moses* dies *Joshua* shall stand up: There shall be a succession of sword-men, and book-men, of Rulers and Teachers, to carry on Christs work in the world, till the top-stone be laid, with grace unto it. The residue of the Spirit

2 Chron. 13. 12. Numb. 13. 32, 33. compared with 14. 9.

Num. 13. 16.

Zach. 4. 7. Malach. 2. 15.

rit is with the Lord, and therefore he can and will put such an anointing of his Spirit upon one and another, as shall fit them to carry on his works in the World. *Joshua* was very valiant, and a man of singular good mettle; yet because he was sure to meet with such troubles, deep distresses, and dealy dangers, as would put him to it, therefore he is prest so frequently to be courageous, *Verse 6. Be strong and of good courage.* Verse 7. *Only be thou strong and very courageous.* Verse 9. *Be strong and of a good courage.* Verse 18. *Only be strong and of a good courage.* Deut. 31. 7. *And Moses called unto Joshua and said unto him, in the sight of all Israel, be strong and of a good courage*, &c. And why all this? not because *Joshua* had discovered any faint-heartedness or cowardise, but because the work he was to undertake was so weighty and perillous, in regard of those many and mighty Nations, whom he was to destroy, and plant the Israelites in their room: the work that *Joshua* was to undertake was attended with many great difficulties and dangers, in respect of the Enemies he was to encounter, as being men of vast and Giant-like statures and strength, and dwelling in Cities with high walls and strongly fortified. Now the main Argument to raise his courage and mettle, is drawn from Gods special presence and assistance, *Joshua* 1. 9. *For the Lord thy God is with thee, whithersoever thou goest.* We are not to understand it of Gods general presence in all places, but of his special, favourable, signal, and eminent presence, which God would manifest in his preservation and protection, notwithstanding all the difficulties, enterprises, dangers and Enemies that he was to encounter with. So 2 *Chron.* 32. 7. *Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed, for the King of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him.* Verse 8. *With him is an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God, to help us, and to fight our battels*, &c. At this time the King of *Assyria* was the greatest Monarch

Moses had a special command from God to charge *Joshua* to be couragious, Deut. 1. 38. cap. 3. 28. God himself also layes the same command upon him, Deut. 31. 23.

march in the world, and the moſt formidable Enemy *Iſrael* had: he had a mighty Army, for there was a hundred fourſcore and five thouſand of them ſlain in one night. Now the great thing they were to mind and attend was, to look narrowly to it, that the favourable, ſignal and eminent preſence of God with them, did raiſe all their hearts above all diſcouragements, fears and diſmayedneſs, what is the chaff to the whirl-wind? what are thorns and briars to a conſuming fire? what is an arm of fleſh, to the arm, ſtrength, and power of a God? what is weakneſs to ſtrength, and the nothing Creature to the Lord of Hoſts? Now if the ſpecial, ſignal preſence of God with his People in their greateſt troubles, and moſt deadly dangers, won't put ſingular courage, life, and mettle into them, what will? *Acts* 23. verſe 10. *And when there aroſe a great diſſention, the chief Captain, fearing leſt Paul ſhould have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the Souldiers to go down, and take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the Caſtle.* Verſe 11. *And the night following the Lord ſtood by him,* [namely in a viſion, or in a dream, or in an extaſie,] *and ſaid be of good cheer Paul: for as thou haſt teſtified of me in Jeruſalem, ſo muſt thou bear witneſs alſo at Rome.* The favourable, ſignal preſence of the Lord with him, turned his Priſon into a Palace. Mr. *Philpot* being a priſoner for the teſtimony of Jeſus, writes thus to his Friends: *Though I tell you, that I am in hell, in the judgement of this world, yet aſſuredly I feel in the ſame the conſolation of heaven, I praiſe God: and this loathſome and horrible priſon, is as pleaſant to me, as the walks in the garden of the Kings-Bench.* When *Paul* was in great danger the Lord ſtood by him, to cheer, comfort, and encourage him: Now God claps him on the back, and puts new life, and mettle into him.

Verſe 21.

Act. and Mon. 1663.

See Acts 27. 23. 24.

When *Dionyſius* was given up by the Executioner to be beheaded, he remained conſtant and couragious, ſaying, come life, come death, I will worſhip none but the God of Heaven and Earth.

When

When *Chryſoſtom* had told *Eudoxia* the empreſs that for her covetouſneſs, ſhe would be called a ſecond *Jezebel* ſhe: thereupon ſent him a threatning meſſage, to which he gave this ſtout and reſolute anſwer: Go tell her, *Nil niſi peccatum timeo, I fear nothing but ſin.*

When the Executioner had kindled the fire behind *Jerom* of *Prague*, he bad him kindle it before his face, for (ſaid he) if I had been afraid of it, I had not come to this place, having had ſo many opportunities offered me to eſcape it. At the giving up of the ghoſt, he ſaid, [*Hanc animam in flammis offero Chriſte tibi,*] *This ſoul of mine in flames of fire, O Chriſt, I offer thee.*

The Emperour coming into Germanie, ſent for *Luther* to *Worms*, but many of his friends (from the danger they apprehended hanging over his head) diſſwaded him from going; to whom he gave this prudent, courageous, and reſolute anſwer, That theſe diſcouragements were caſt in his way by Satan, who knew that by his profeſſion of the Truth in ſo illuſtrious a place, his Kingdom would be ſhaken, and that therefore if he knew, that there were as many Devils in *Worms*, as there were tiles on the houſes, yet he would go.

The German Knight in his Apologetical Letter for *Luther* againſt the Pontifical Clergy, ſaith, I will go through with what I have undertaken againſt you, and will ſtir up men to ſeek their freedom, I neither care nor fear what may befal me, being prepared for either event, either to ruine you, to the great benefit of my Country, of my ſelf to fall with a good conſcience, *&c.*

William Flower (the Martyr) ſaid, That the Heavens ſhould ſooner fall, as I will forſake my profeſſion, or budge in the leaſt degree from it.

Apollonius being asked, If he did not tremble at the ſight of the Tyrant? made this anſwer, God which gave him a terrible countenance, hath given alſo unto me an undaunted heart.

When *Gardiner* asked *Rowland Taylor*, If he did not know him? *&c.* To whom he anſwered, Yea, I know you, and all you greatneſs, yet you are but a mortal

man

man; and if I should be afraid of your Lordly looks, why fear ye not God the Lord of us all?

Basil affirms of the primitive Christians, that they had so much courage and magnanimity of spirit in their sufferings, that many Heathens, seeing their heroick zeal, resolutenes, and undauntednes, turned Christians.

When one of the ancient Martyrs was terrifyed with the threatnings of his persecutors, he replyed, There is nothing of things visible, nor nothing of things invisible that I fear, I will stand to my profession of the Name of Christ, and contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the Saints, come on't what will.

By these instances (which may be of great use in this trying day) you may clearly see, how the Lord has manifested his favourable, signal, and eminent presence to his People, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, by raising up in them a spirit of courage, magnanimity, and holy gallantry. But,

Seventhly, the Lord doth manifest his favourable, signal, and eminent presence to his People, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, by preserving them from troubles in the midst of troubles, from dangers in the midst of dangers. Dan. 3. 25. *He answered, and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.* The presence of the Son of God preserves these three valiant Champions from dangers in the midst of dangers; They fell down bound in the fiery Furnace (saith my Author) and they walked loose in the midst of the fire without any hurt, for the Angel of the Lord descended together with them in the same moment, who shook the flames of the fire forth out of the Furnace, and preserved the Servants of God safe without any trouble, being cooled as it were with a dew coming upon them in a pleasant manner. But give me leave to say, that these words [*One like the Son of God,*] doth not argue that in this vision there was not a representation of the Son of God to

Polanus.

come

come afterwards in the flesh; but rather, that this great mystery was here shew'd for the greater comfort of the faithful, that they might courageously bear all their sufferings, having the Prince and Head both of Angels and men present with them herein to mitigate their pains and carry them through with joy; this being a greater wonder of grace and love, then to have the protection of a meer Angel, concerning whose power also, whether he can change the nature of fire, that it shall not burn, is very doubtful and questionable, seeing this argueth omnipoteney, which is in God alone, and not communicable to any Creature. Where by the way you may observe a strong and solid argument, to prove that Jesus is the Son of God, against all gainsayers, thus: He whom *Nebuchadnezzar* saw in the fiery Furnace, was the Son of God in an humane shape; but he was typically *Jesus, ergo*, &c. The Major is proved, becauſe he did that which none but God could do, *viz.* he qualified the most fierce and raging fire, which burnt up some, coming but near it, and had no power at the same instant of time, so much as to sing a hair of the heads of others; The Minor is proved also, becauſe God appearing in a glorious humane shape at any time, was not God the Father or Holy Ghost, but God the Son; for *no man hath seen God at any time*, but the Son hath revealed him; both when in him appearing in a humane shape under the Law, and when, under the Gospel, shewing himself in the man Jesus, born of the Virgin *Mary*, and hypostatically united unto him. Exod. 3. 2. *And the Angel of the Lord* (that is Christ the Angel of the Covenant) *appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a Bush; and he looked, and behold, the Bush burned with fire, and the Bush was not consumed.* Verse 3. *And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the Bush is not burnt.* The Hebrew word *Seneh* which is he used, signifies a Dry-bush, a Bramble-bush, whence the Mount and Wilderness is called *Sinai*, of the store of brambles that grew there, or of

Verse 22.

1 John 18. 1 Tim. 6. 16. 1 Joh. 4. 12.

Christ is called the Messenger or Angel of the Covenant. Mal. 3. 1.

of this Bush or Vision. Now for a Bush, a Dry-bush, a Bramble-bush to be all on fire and yet not consumed, this must be a wonder of wonders: but all this is from the good will of him that dwelt in the Bush. Out of these two Verses we may briefly observe these few things:

First, the low, and weak, and brittle estate of the Church, represented by a Bush, a Dry-bush, a Bramble-bush; what more brittle, weak, base, low, and despicable, than a Dry-bush, a Bramble-bush? What is such a Bush good for but the fire, or to stop a gap, or some such inferiour use? A Bush is a black, deformed, and uncomely thing. Corruption and affliction, sin and suffering renders the Saints very uncomely. The Church is compared not to a strong sturdy oke, but to a weak brittle Bush, and Elsewhere to a Vine, a Dove, a Lamb, a Sheep, &c. all frail weak Creatures. It is good for all Saints to have low and mean thoughts of themselves for here they are resembled to a Dry-bush, a Bramble-bush. But,

Secondly, a Dry-bush, a Bramble-bush pricks, wounds and vexes them that handle it roughly. This Bush is in Hebrew called *Sneh*, (as I have hinted before) which the Hebrews describe to be a shrub full of pricks, and without fruit, and so thick that a bird cannot enter without the ruffling and pulling off her feathers. Let the proud enemies of the Church look to themselves, for this Bramble-bush will vex, prick, wound, tear, and put them to the worst, when they have done their worst. In all the Ages of the World this Bramble-bush, the Church, hath been a cup of trembling unto all the People round about, and a burdensome stone; so that all that burden themselves with it, shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the Earth be gathered together against it. Zach. 12. 2, 3. But,

Thirdly, consider the cruelties of the Churches enemies is signified and represented by a fire; The Bush burns with fire: In this resemblance is shadowed out the oppressed, afflicted and persecuted estate of the Israelites in

in the Egyptian Furnace; and by fire here is meant the moſt painful terrifying and tormenting afflictions and miſeries that ſhould attend them. Great afflictions and perſecutions are in Scripture commonly ſet out by fire, as the fiery tryal, the fire of affliction. Fire is very painful, and tormenting (in which reſpects Hell-torments are compared to fire,) ſo are great afflictions, miſeries, and ſufferings; they are very painful and tormenting; they put perſons into ſore pain and travel. Next to the pangs of Conſcience, and the pains of Hell, there are none to theſe pains and pangs that are bred and fed by ſore afflictions, by terrible tryals. It has been the lot and portion of Gods deareſt-Children, to be exerciſed with very great and griveous afflictions, and that in order to the diſcovery of ſin, to the imbittering of ſin, to the preventing of ſin, and to the purging away of ſin, and in order to the tryal of grace, the diſcovery of grace, the exerciſe of grace, and the increaſe of grace; and in order to the weaning of them from this World, and to the compleating their conformity to Chriſt, the Captain of their ſalvation, who was made perfect through ſufferings; & to ripen them for Heaven, and to work in them more, bowels of pity & compaſſion to thoſe that are in miſery & that ſigh & groan under their Egyptian task maſters.

1 Pet. 4. 12. Lam. 2. 3, 4. Hab. 3. 13.

Heb. 2. 10.

Fourthly, conſider the eminence of their preſervation, though in the fire yet unconſumed. The Church of God was hot, yea all in flames, and yet not conſumed. Let the fire be never ſo hot, ſo fierce, ſo furious, ſo ſpreading, the Church ſhall have a being, and live and bear up in the midſt of the flames. If the Church like the Sea looſe in one place it gits ground in another; when the worſt of men, and Devils, and Informers have done their worſt, the Lord will have a name among his People on Earth. The Church with the Lamp in the ſtory laughes at all thoſe winds, that would blow it out. Well may we ſtand amazed and wonder, that ſo flaming and terrible a fire, falling upon ſo contemptible a Buſh, and ſo dry and deſpicable a ſhrub, ſhould not preſently turn

This fire was a ſupernatural fire for, 1. It continued without fuell to feed upon. 2. It kept below & aſcended not. 3. It burned and conſumed not. All which ſhews it to be a ſupernatural work.

it into ashes; for why is the fire too weak? O no. Is the Bush so strong, as to defend and secure it self against devouring flames? O no. Or is the Bush not apt to burn and consume by so fierce a fire? O no. It is not from the impotency of the fire, nor from the strength or constitution of the Bush; for a dry Bramble-bush in the matter of it is as combustible as any chaff, and as easily destroyed as any stubble; but because the natural force thereof was restrained by the glorious power of God: for if God concur not with the nature of things, they cannot work nor shew their kind. There are two inseparable qualities of fire: 1. To give light. 2. To burn; And yet Divine power divides and separates these two: for this fire giveth light, but burneth not. O what a mighty, what an astonishing preservation is here! The afflictions and sufferings of the Church are not a consuming fire, but a trying fire, as the fire in a Furnace consumes the dross, but tryes the gold, and puts a new lustre, beauty, and glory upon it. *Hesiod* speaks of thirty thousand Deity-Gods, that were keepers of men; but what are so many thousand Gods, to that one God that neither slumbers nor sleeps, but day and night keeps his People as his Jewels, as the apple of his eye, that keeps them in his Pavilion as a Prince his Favorite. There is a Dialogue between a Heathen and a Jew; after the Jews return from captivity (all Nations round about them being enemies unto them) the Heathen asked the Jew, how he and his Contrey-men could hope for any safety, because (saith he) every one of you is as a silly sheep compassed about with fifty wolves. I but, saith the Jew, we are kept by such a shepherd, as can kill all these wolves when he pleases, and by that means preserve his sheep. But,

Psalm 121. 4. Isa. 27. 3. Mal. 3. 17. Zach. 2. 8. Psalm 31. 20.

Fifthly, consider how this eminent preservation of his People from dangers in the midst of dangers is effected and brought about, and that is by the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Angel of the Covenant; for *Moses* saith expressly of this Vision, that *the Lord appeared unto Moses, and God called unto him out of the midst of the*

Bush

Bush, & said Moses, Moses, &c. This calling of *Moses* by his name, & the doubling of his name, in such a familiar & loving manner, was a sign of Gods singular favour to *Moses*, Choice Favorits God frequently called by name, as you may see in those instances of *Abraham, Isaac* and *Jacob*, &c. and so our Lord Jesus Christ called *Peter* by his name, & *Nathanael* by his name, & *Mary* by her name, &c.) The same presence of the Son of God, that preserved the three Children (or rather Champions) in that furious furnace of *Nebuchadnezzar* from burning or singeing, preserved the Bush, though not from burning, yet from consuming, by restraining the natural force of the fire, and strengthning the Bush against it. The Bush, the Church in the fire, came forth of the hottest Furnace that ever was kindled, not blacker nor worse, but brighter and better, & more glorious than the Sun in his strength; and all this from the presence of the Angel of the Covenant that dwelt in the Bush. Divine presence can preserve a flaming Bush from being consumed. Witness our preservation to this day, though we have been as a burning Bush. *God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved, God shall help her, and that right early.* Heb. *When the morning appeareth*: that is, in the nick of time, when help shall be most seasonable and best welcom. The presence of the Lord in the midst of his Church, will secure her from being greatly moved in the midst of all those great dreadful confusions, that are abroad in the world. Hence the Church is called, *Jehovah shammah, The Lord is there.* His presence in Heaven, makes it heaven, & his presence in the Church, makes it happy and safe. Nothing shall disturb or harm them, that have the presence of God in the midst of them. The Church is built upon a rock, she is invincible. Jer. 1. 8. *Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee, to deliver thee, saith the Lord.* Verse 17. *Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee, be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them.* Verse 18. *For behold, I have made thee this day a defenced City, and an*

Verse 4.

Scipio by way of favour call'd the Citizens by their names, and so *Cyrus* upon the same ground called his Souldiers by their names.

Psalm 46. 5.

Ezek. 48. 35.

Mat. 16. 18.

Opposition is as *Calvin* writes to the French King *Evangelii genius*, the black Angel, that dogs the Gospel at the heels.

an iron pillar and brasen wall against the whole Land, against the Kings of Judah, against the Princes thereof, against the Priests thereof, and against the people of the Land. Verse 19. *And they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee.* Gods presence with his Messengers, is a guard, and a safe-guard, all-sufficient against all opposition whatsoever. Earthly Princes and Soveraigns are not wont to go with those whom they send on Embassage, but God always goes along with those whom he sends; & will by his powerful presence protect & defend them, against opposers, at all times & in all places, when all others fail and forsake us, Christs presence is security sufficient, for *If he be with us, who can be against us?* They must first prevail against him, before they can prevail against them, that withstand and oppose those whom he standeth by to back and protect. How comes this to pass, that *Jeremiah* a man, a man alone, should bear up so stoutly, and stand so strong against Kings, Princes, Priests & People? 'tis from the signal presence of God with him. [*I am with thee.*] And what can all the great ones of the World, and all the wicked ones of the World, do against one Messenger of the Lord, that is armed with his glorious power? The Ambassadours of the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, must not be terrified with the multitude of opposers, nor with the grandure or greatness of opposers; but set the presence of the Lord against them all, and say as that noble Souldier *Pædarelus* (in *Erasmus*) did, to them that told him, of that numerous and mighty Army, which came against him, *Tanto plus gloriæ referemus, quoniam eo plures superabimus.* The number of opposers makes the Christian conquests the more illustrious. The more the Pharisees of old, and their Successors of late time have opposed the Truth, the more it hath prevailed; and 'tis observable that the Reformation in *Germany* was much furthered by the Papists opposition, yea, when two Kings (amongst many others) wrote against *Luther*, viz. *Henry* the eight of *England*, and

In some cases a man were better loose his life, than be cowardly. Aristotle Eth. 3. cap. 1.

and *Ludovicus* of *Hungary*; this kingly title being entred into the controversie (making men more curious to examine the matter) stirred up a general inclination towards *Luther*'s opinion. So, Jerem. 15. 20. *And I will make thee unto this People a fenced brasen wall, and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee, for I am with thee, to save thee, and to deliver thee, saith the Lord.* When the Messengers of the Lord go on constantly and courageously in the faithful discharge of their duties, not relenting, or yielding, or complying with their greatest opposers, then they shall have such a signal presence of the Lord with them, as shall sufficiently protect them against all their enemies might and malice, wrath, and rage. Verse 21. *And I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible, or violent ones.* Though thou shouldest fall into the hand of the wicked (*idest*, power) and into the hand of the terrible, and violent ones, yet they shall not hurt thee, nor harm thee, they shall not have their wills upon thee; when thou art in their hands I will lay a law of restraint upon their hearts, that they shall not mischief thee, nor triumph over thee; I will be sure to secure thee, and rescue thee from dangers in the midst of dangers. A gracious Messenger of the Lord in the midst of all oppositions (as *Chrysostome* said of *Peter*) is a man made all of fire walking in stuble, he overcomes and consumes all opposition; all difficulties are but whetstones to his fortitude. The Moon will run her course though the dogges bark at it, so does the Traveller, and so will the faithful messengers of the Lord hold on in their way and work, let men and devils bark & do their worst.

Moulin speaking of the French Protestants, said, When Papists hurt us for reading the Scriptures, we burn with zeal to be reading of them; he is a fool, we say, that will be laughed out of his coat; but he's a fool in folio that will be laughed out of his skin, out of his profession, out of his Religion, out of his principles, out of the wayes of God, nay out of his soul, out of his salvation: because

cause he can't endure to be opposed, derided, or laughed at by lewd and wicked men. The Divine presence will make a man set light by such paper-shot.

A gracious spirit is raised by opposition; the more opposition it meetes with in a way of duty, the more resolute he is for it: So far is he from being afraid of the threatnings of men, of the frowns of men, or of losing this mans favour, or of incurring such a mans displeasure, that his spirit riseth far more for it. It is with such a man as it is with the fire in Winter, the fire burns the hotter, because of the coldness of the air; So it is with all the Messengers of the Lord, who are inflamed in the way of their duty. Come to *David*, and tell him, O there is a *Goliah*, and he is come out with a spear like a weavers beam, and there is one that bears his target goes before him; where is he? saith *David*, I will fight with him, saith he. Difficulties and dangers do but whet and raise his spirit, he is not afraid of any uncircumcised Philistin. Ah, my Friends, this is a true noble spirit! Holy greatness of mind lies in this, when a mans spirit is born up upon the greatness of his God, and the goodness of his cause; and if that will not bear me out, saith such a soul, let me sink in it. I am content to perish. That's a good word, more worth than a world in a faithful Ministers eye Ezek. 3. 8. *Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads.* Verse 9. *As an Adamant, harder than a flint, have I made thy forehead; fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.* The Adamant is the hardest of stones, it is *Lapis servabilis*, because it keeps it self by its hardness from all injuries, no weather, no violence of hammer, or fire will break it, or conquer it. God engages himself to give the Prophet such undaunted boldness, and invincible courage and constancy, as neither shame nor fear should prevail against. Divine presence, Divine assistance does always accompany a Divine call; such whom God sends he seconds, such whom he calls, he encourages, against all difficulties and discou-

1 Sam. 17. 4. to the 11. compared with Ver. 26, 27.

discouragements, such as are called by Christ, and sent by Christ, shall never want the strengthning, comforting, coroborating, animating, and preserving presence of Christ: It is this Divine presence, that makes them stand it out, and shew themselves like men; like men of courage, like men of God, and that secures them from dangers in the midst of dangers; in the greatest storms the Adamant shrinks not, it fears not, it changeth not its hue, no not in the least; Divine presence will keep gracious men from shrinking, fearing, and changing their way, their work, their Lord and Master, in the worst of storms that can beat upon them; in all winds and weather the Adamant is still the same, and so will all the faithful Messengers of the Lord be, what ever wind may blow upon them: The signal presence of God with them will keep them from fearing, fainting, flying, and preserve them from dangers in the midst of dangers. But,

Eightly, The Lord doth manifest his favourable, signal and eminent presence with his People, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, by frustrating and disappointing the plots, designs, counsels and contrivances of their powerful, subtil, secret, and malicious Adversaries, who would fain be multiplying of their troubles, sorrows, sufferings, and miseries upon them, *Nehem.* 4. 8. *And conspired all of them together, to come and fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it.* Verse 11. *And our adversaries said, they shall not know, neither see, till we come in the midst amongst them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease.* Verse 15. *And it came to pass, when our Enemies knew that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsels to nought,* &c. The craft of the Churches Enemies, is never but accompanied with cruelty, and their cruelty is seldom without craft; the Devil lends them his seven heads to plot, and his seven horns to push; but in the things wherein they deal proudly God is above them, and by his presence with his People, he brings

The Thebanes had a band of men they called *Sacra Chors*, consisting of such only as were joyned in bonds of love, and resolved to live and dye together: these Jews under *Nehemiah*'s command were such, and were therefore insuperable.

brings all their plots, counsels, and enterprises to naught: The Gunpowder Traitors betrayed themselves, and all came to light; though they had digged as low as hell, to hide their counsels from the Lord. The Enemies of the Jews in *Nehemiah*'s time made great brags at first what they would do, but when they saw their plots discovered, and their purposes defeated, they are presently crest-fallen, and have no mind nor courage to advance at all; so that to these Plotters may be fitly applyed, that which *Guicciardin* saith of *Charles* the *Eight*, King of *France*, in his expedition against *Naples*: That he came into the field like thunder and lightning, but went out like a snuff, more than a Man at first, and less than a Woman at last. In all the Ages of the World, the heads, the wits, the hands, the hearts and the tongues of the wicked have been engaged against the Just; they have been still a plotting and devising mischief against the favourits of heaven (as if Rebels could medle with none but the Children of a King,) and yet Gods signal presence with his People, in point of affection and protection has blasted all their designs, and frustrated all their counsels; as the rage of wicked Men against the Saints have been endless, so it has been fruitless, because God has been in the midst of them. *Haman* plots against the lives, liberties and Estates of the Jews, but his plot was timely discovered, and seasonably prevented, and the grand Plotter and Informer detected, debased, condemned and executed. *Esther* 7. 10. *So they hanged Haman on the Gallows, that he had prepared for Mordecai, then was the Kings wrath pacified.* The Kings of *Persia* had absolute and unquestionable power, to do whatsoever they listed: *Quicquid libuit, licuit*; all their Subjects, except their Queens, were no better than Slaves, *whom they would they slew, and whom they would they kept alive: whom they would they set up, and whom they would they put down.* *Haman* is here without order of Law, more than the Kings command, adjudged to be hanged; the truth is, it was a clear case, and

Esther 3. 8. ult.

Dan. 5. 19.

Esther 7. 9.

and the Malefactor was self condemned: *Hang him therefore*, saith the King; a short and just Sentence, and soon executed. Ah how soon is *Haman* fallen from the Palace to the Gallows, from the highest Stage of honour, to the lowest stair of disgrace; from feasting with the King, to be made a feast for crows, and so lies wrapt up in the sheet of perpetual infamy: *So let all thine Enemies perish, O Lord.* It is a good observation of *Josephus* upon *Esther* 7. 10. *I cannot* (saith he) *but admire the Lords wisdom, and acknowledge his Justice, in that he not only punished him for his malice to the Church, but by turning his own mischief upon himself, hath made him an example to all posterity; hanging him up in gibbets, that others may take warning.* Let all Plotters and Informers beware of making a match with mischief, they may have enough of it in the end. *Haman* was a main stickler for the Devil, who paid him his wages at last, with a witness, or if you will with a halter; Let all the Enemies of the Saints tremble at such ends, and be careful to avoid them, by flying such like foul and flagitious practices. The bloody plot being thus laid by *Haman*, the Kings Minion, behold the foottsteps of Gods favourable, signal, and eminent presence for his People, and with his People, in their deadly dangers, and that in raising up in them a very great Spirit of faith, prayer, and mourning, and by raising an undaunted courage and resolution in *Esther*: *And so I will go in unto the King, and if I perish I perish*: This she speaks not rashly or desperately as prodigal of her life, but as one willing to sacrifice the same for the honour of God, his cause and People; saying as that Martyr (*can I die but once for Christ?*) *Esther* had rather die than shrink from her duty; she thought it better to do worthily and perish for a Kingdom, than unworthily and perish with a Kingdom: here was a mighty presence of God, in raising *Esther*'s heroical courage and resolution, above all those visible dangers, that did attend her attempt of going in to the King, against the known Law of the

Unde mihi continuo mirari nomen Dei, & sapientiam & justitiam ejus agnoscere, &c. Joseph. Ant. lib. 1. cap. 6.

Esther 4.

Verse 16.

Cap. 5. 2. Land: (And the King held out to *Esther* the golden Scepter,) He did not kick her out of his presence, as some *Cambyses* would have done; neither did he command her to the block, as *Henry* the *Eight* did his *Ann Bullen*, upon a meer misprision of disloyalty; neither yet did he cashier her, as he had *Vashti* for a less offence, but by holding out his Scepter, shews his gracious respects unto her: This was the Lords own work, and a great demonstration of his signal presence with her, in giving her favour in the eyes of the great King. (*So Esther drew near and touched the top of the Scepter*) with her hand saith the Chaldee, with her mouth saith the Vulgar translation; this she did either in token of submission, or as a sign of reverence and subjection, or for the avoiding of danger: For as *Josephus* saith, He that touched the Kings Scepter, was out of the reach of evil; or according to the custom of the times: Gods favourable presence is transparent, in the Kings extended favour to her: (*On that night could not the King sleep*) Heb. *the Kings sleep fled away*; and like a shadow it fled away so much the faster, as it was more followed. Crowns have their cares, thistles in their arms, and thorns in their sides: So he that commanded one hundred and twenty seven Provinces, cannot command one hours sleep. The Kings head might perhaps be troubled with thinking, what great request it should be that *Esther* had to make, that was so hardly drawn from her; but herein appeared the signal presence of God in keeping the King awake, for *Mordecai* might have been hanged before *Esther* had known any thing of it, (*Haman* being come early the next morning, *Vers.* 4. to beg this of the King) had not God kept him from sleep, and directed him to read in that place of the Chronicles, were *Mordecai*'s service was recorded, and towards way to his advancement, and *Haman*'s ruine. Gods favourable presence shin'd upon his People, in keeping the King from sleep, for excellent ends, & in putting fitfull thoughts into his heart for great purposes. God will appear for his poor People,

Esther 6. 1.

ἐν τῷ καιρῷ, *in the nick and opportunity of time*, when there is but a step between them and death; and further, the power, providence, presence and goodness of God was made evident, in the behalf of his People, in directing the Reader to that very place, where *Mordecai*'s singular service, in discovering the barbarous and murderous plot, that was laid against the Kings life and Crown, was recorded. That *Mordecai* should have no present reward, but that it should be defer'd till a fitter opportunity, when God might be more glorified, in the signal preservation of his People, & in the famous overthrow of their Enemies, was from that mighty hand of God, that was stretched out for the good of his People. In this great Story we may as in a mirrour see, how the Lord by his wisdom, providence, presence, and grace, brings about and over-rules the wills of men, the affairs of men, the counsels of men, the designs of men, the words & speeches of men, to the fulfilling of his own will and decree, and the promoting of his own honour and glory, and the good of his People, when vain men think least of doing his will, or serving his providence. Here you may see the wisdom, prudence, and courage of *Esther*, striking whilest the Iron was hot, charging the bloody decree upon *Haman* to his face, and that before the King: that things might the better stick and work, and painting him out in his own proper colours. (*The adversary*) Heb. the man adversary; the *Lycanthropos*, the man of might that distresseth us. (*And Enemy*) that is the cruel Enemy, the bloody Enemy, the utter Enemy, the worst Enemy, that sworn sword-man of Satan, from whom *Haman* hath drawn his ancient enmity. (*Is this wicked Haman*) that is as wicked a wretch as goes on two legs, a man of blood, a man made up of mischief and malice, a sink of wickedness, a very mystery of iniquity, a breathing Devil. *Tiberius* was rightly characterized by his Tutor *Theodorus Gadareus*, dirt knod with blood; *Haman* was such another, if not worse; and now Queen *Esther* is plain and round with him, and calls a spade, a spade, though others stiled him, No-

Esther 6. 2.

Gen. 3. 15.

ble, Great, Serene, Magnificent, &c. *Esther* gives him his own with a witness. (*The Adversary and Enemy is this wicked Haman*) but what a mighty courage had *Esther* to speak at this rate before the King, and of his grand Favourite, and before his face? Surely all this was from the signal presence of God with her Soul; this was a great work of Faith, and a singular fruit of prayer. *And now Haman stood up to make request for his life*,) O what a strange turn of things is here all upon a sudden! He that a little before was bowed unto by all men, is now upon his knees before a woman; he that was the very day before a professed Enemy of the Jews, is now suppliant to a Jewess; he that a few weeks before had contrived the death and ruine of the Jews, is now begging hard for his own life; he that had provided a Gallows for *Mordecai*, fears nothing more now than that himself should be hanged on it: Yesterday O the caps, knees, and bows that *Haman* had, and now the same Man covers his face in token of his irrecoverable ruine. The Turks cast a black gown upon such, as they sit at supper with the Great Turk, and presently strangle them: Many of their Visiers or greatest Favourits die in this sort; which makes them use this Proverb, He that is greatest in Office, is but a Statue of glass. *Plutarch* wittily compareth great Men to Counters, which now stand for a thousand pound, and anon for a farthing; this was *Haman*'s case: And so *Sejanus*, the same Senatours who accompanied him to the Senate, conducted him to Prison; they which sacrificed to him as to their God, which kneeled down to adore him, scoffed at him, seeing him dragged from the Temple to the Gaol, from supreme honour to extreme ignominy. When once the Emperour frowned upon him, they shewed themselves most passionate against him; saying, that if *Cæsar* had clemency, he ought to reserve it for men, and not to use it toward Monsters; this is Courtiers custom to adore the rising Sun, and when great Favourits fall into disgrace, all about Princes will be ready to pluck them

Esther 7. 8.

Courtiers shift their sails to the sitting of every wind: A cubit was half a yard at least, in those parts, they had trees very small, or they might piece one to another; but why so high a Gallows, but for the greater disgrace to *Mordecai*, and terrour to all that should slight the Kings grand Favourit.

them up by the roots; if the season be fair to clear the Court or Land of such noisom weeds. The Kings indignation being up, the Courtiers point at the Gallows fifty Cubits high, that *Haman* had set up for *Mordecai*. All are now for *Mordecai*, there is not a Courtier that has one good word for *Haman*: Ah what a rare hand of God was there in all these things, for the good of his People, and the utter overthrow of their grand Enemy! To sum all up in a little room, the breaking of the Kings sleep, was the breaking of one of the most bloody designs that ever was laid against the People of God. Well, what though the King could not sleep, could he not lye still in his bed? No, he must have a book, and that book must be the book of Chronicles, and that book must be opened where accidentally (not by turning to that place purposely) yet surely by Gods Providence directing him that read, to that very story concerning *Mordecai*, where was registred his faithfulness, in discovering and disappointing of a murther intended against the King; whereupon God sets this act of faithfulness so close upon the Kings heart, that he could not rest till *Mordecai* was nobly rewarded for it, and this reward must be *Haman*'s ruine; his advancement, *Haman*'s abasement, and this was the rise of *Haman*'s disappointment. In this famous instance you may run and read, the favourable, signal and eminent presence of the Lord, in the miraculous preservation of his Church from a total ruine and destruction, and in the disappointing the plots, designs, and counsels of their greatest Enemies, and in taking of them in the very snares, that they had laid for others; sutable to that of the Psalmist: *He made a pit and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made; his mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing upon his own pate.* Psalm 7. 16, 17

Henry the Third of *France*, was stabbed in the same Chamber, where he had helped to contrive the French Massacre: And his Brother *Charles* the Ninth, had blood given him to drink, for he was worthy;

worthy, there is no end of Stories of this nature, so *Psalm* 9. 15. *The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made: in the net which they hid, is their own foot taken.* The wicked are compared to Hunters for their cruelty, and to Fowlers for their craft; but see their success, they are sunk down in their own pit, caught in their own net; thus it befel *Pharaoh*, *Jabin*, *and Sisera*, *Senacherib*, *Antiochus Epiphanes*, *Maxentius* the Tyrant, who fell into the *Tiber*, from his own false bridge laid for *Constantine*; the Spanish Armado, and our Powder-plotters. Ver. 16. *The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgajon, Selah.* *Goliah* was killed with his own sword: Christs justice hath two acclamatory Notes, *Higgajon*, *Selah*, the like is not found in all the Scripture, as worthy of present admiration, and of deep and perpetual meditation. I have been the longer a glancing at this famous Story of *Esther*, because of its seasonableness, and suitableness to the dayes and times wherein we live.

Exod. 9. 15. Judg. 10. 4. 2 Chron. 32. Euseb. lib. 9. c. 9.

A further proof of this eight particular, that is under our present consideration you have in *Isa.* 8. 9. *Associate your selves O ye People, and ye shall be broken in pieces, and give ear all ye of far Countreys: gird your selves, and ye shall be broken in pieces: gird your selves, and ye shall be broken in pieces.* Heb. *And be broken in pieces, And be broken in pieces; And be broken in pieces.* It is thrice repeated, to work it the deeper into the minds and hearts of those, that should either hear or read it; and to give the stronger assurance of the certainty of their being inevitably broken in pieces, who were adversaries and conspirators against the People of God: This speech is directed to the Kings of *Assyria*, and other Nations that combined with him against the People of God; but especially against the City of *Jerusalem*: It is an holy *Ironie*, or laughing to scorn the associating Enemies of the Church. Well, saith the Prophet, proceed as unanimously as politickly, and as powerfully in your combinations, consultations, and

Counsel is the extract of reason, the result of serious & sad debates, saith Cicero.

prepa-

preparations as you can, yet be assured, that all your associations shall be dissolved, and your counsels frustrated, and your attempts returned back upon your selves, to your own ruin and confusion. Verse 10. *Take counsel together,* [Heb. *consult a consultation,* to wit about invading *Judah*, and surprizing *Jerusalem*] *and it shall come to naught: Speak the word and it shall not stand, for God is with us:* Consult, conclude, determine, resolve upon what you please, you shall never be able by all your power and policy to prevail against the People of God, for his favourable, signal, and eminent presence, is constantly with them, to assist, counsel, and protect them against all oppositions and assaults, God bringeth to naught the councel of the Nations; neither the Devil nor his Imps, nor any of their counsels, or inchantments, shall ever be able to stand before the presence of the Lord with his People. *Charles* the Fifth, and the French King, had upon counsel taken covenanted and agreed, utterly to extirpate the Lutheran Faction out of all their Dominions; but God found them other employment, and by his signal presence with his People, he gave them an happy Halcyon. Let Men and Devils conspire, let them plot, consult and determine, all shall be in vain, because there is no counsel against the Lord, there is no possibility of carrying of it against the presence of the Lord with his People, his signal presence will be their greatest safety and security in the midst of all plots, designs, dangers, &c. The signal presence of God with his People, marrs and frustrates all the plots, counsels, and curious contrivances of the worlds wizards, as might be shewed in those instances of *Balaam*, *Pharaoh*, *Saul*, *Herod*, with many others. But I must hasten, and therefore.

See Isai. 7. 5, 6. Psalm 33. 3.

Psalm 33. 10.

Ninthly, the Lord doth manifest his favourable signal, and eminent presence with his People, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, by his sympathizing with them in all their troubles, tryals, distresses, dangers, as you may clearly see by consulting

sulting the choice Scriptures in the margin: So *Isa.* 63. 9. *In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them, in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them and carried them all the days of old.* Christ is here in the Hebrew called, *The Angel of his face*, either because he doth exactly resemble God his Father, or because he appeareth before the face or in the presence of God for us. This Angel took to heart their afflictions, he was himself grieved for them, and with them. This Angel secured and safegarded them all the way thorow the Wilderness from *Egypt* to *Canaan*. This Angel did not only lead them, but he also lifted them up and took them in his arms, as Parents or Nurses are wont to do with such Children, that are young, and weakly, and in danger. And this Angel carryed them, as the Eagle doth her young ones, that are not fully fledged, or that are unable yet to fly on her wings. O the pity, the clemency, the sympathy, and admirable compassion of Christ to his People in their suffering estate! *Zach.* 2. 8. *He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye.* The eye is the tenderest piece of the tendrest part; the eye is kept most diligently, and strongly guarded by nature with five tunicles. A man can better bear a thump on the back, the biting of his finger, the cutting of his hand, the pricking of his leg, or a blow upon his arm, than a touch on the eye. O that persecutors would be quiet, and let Gods People alone, and take heed how they meddle with Gods eyes. There is no touching of them, to wrong, or injure them, but you wrong and injure the holy one of Israel, who will certainly revenge himself upon you; they that strike at Gods eyes, do through them strike at God himself, which he will never put up. 'Tis a dangerous thing, to molest and trouble, to afflict or annoy the People of God, for God himself is very sensible of it, and accordingly he will certainly requite it. *Acts* 9. 4. *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* They that persecute the Servants of Christ, they persecute Christ himself, who liveth in them; and is

Exod. 2. 23, 24, 25. c. 3. 7, 8, 9, 10. Isa. 37. 28, 29. Ez. 35. 7, 8, 9, 10. Mat. 25. 4. ult. Deut. 32. 9, 10, 11 John 14. 9, 10, Col. 1. 15. Heb. 9. 24. Rom. 8. 34.

Ibhon of *Ish*, it is here called *Bath*, the daughter of the eye, because it is as dear to a man as an only daughter. *Oculus & fama non patiuntur jocos*, *The eye and the good name will endure no jests.*

is mystically united to them. Look as there is by virtue of the natural union a mutual sympathy betwixt the head and the members, the Husband and the Wife: so 'tis here betwixt Christ and his Saints, for he is a most sympathizing, compassionate, tender-hearted Saviour. Those that shoot at the Saints hit Christ, their sufferings are held his, and their reproaches are counted his. He that bore the Saints griefs when he was on Earth, (really and properly) he bears them still now he is in Heaven, (in a way of sympathy) Christ in his glorified state hath a very tender sense of all the evil that is done to his Children, his members, his Spouse, and looks upon it as done to himself. A great Lord said to another great Lord of the Council in King *Henry* the Eighths dayes, concerning *Cranmer*, Let him alone, for the King will not suffer his finger to ake. So say I to the persecutors of the day; Let the People of God alone, for if you do but make their finger ake, God will make your heads and hearts ake for it, before he has done with you. But,

Heb. 4. 15. c. 5. 2. Col. 1. 24. Heb. 13 13. Isa. 53. 4.

See the first part of my *Golden Key*, p. 277 278. 279. more of this.

Tenthly, the Lord doth manifest his favourable, signal, and eminent presence with his People, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, by pouring out upon them a greater spirit of prayer and supplication, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, than formerly they have had. *Isa.* 26. 16. *Lord in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer, when thy chastening was upon them.* [*They poured out their still prayer.*] The Hebrew word *Lachas*, signifieth properly, a soft or low kind of muttering, which can hardly be heard. The Prophet hereby would intimate to us, that in their great troubles, and deepest distresses, they sighed or groned unto God, and prayed in a still and silent manner. Saints never visit God more with her prayers, than when he visits them most with his rod. Saints never pray with that seriousness, that spiritualness, that heavenlyness, that humbleness, that brokenness, that fervency, that frequency, as they do when they are under the mighty

Before they would say a Prayer, but now they poured out a Prayer.

hand of God; and all this is from that signal presence of God, that is with them, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, &c. When it was a day of great trouble, of great distress, of great danger to the People of God in *Germany*, God poured out a very great spirit of prayer upon *Luther*; at length he comes out of his closet triumphingly, saying to his Fellow-labourers and Friends: *Vicimus, vicimus*; *We have overcome, we have overcome.* At which time it is observed, that there came out a proclamation from *Charles* the Fift, that none should be further molested for the profession of the Gospel. In dayes of troubles and distress *Luther* was so warm, zealous, and powerful in prayer, that made one of his best Friends say, (*Ille vir potuit, quod voluit*) *That man could have of God what he pleased.* Being once very warm in prayer, he let fall this transcendent rapture of a daring faith, *Fiat mea voluntas, Let my will be done*; (and then falls off sweetly) *Mea voluntas, Domine, quia tua, My will, Lord, because thy will.* It is reported in the life of *Luther*, that when he prayed it was *tanta reverentia ut si Deo, & tanta fiducia ut si amico, It was with so much reverence as if he were praying to God, and with so much boldness as if he had been speaking to his Friend.* I have read of a fountain, that at noon day is cold, and at midnight it growes warm; so, many Christians are cold in praying, in hearing, &c. in the day of prosperity, but yet are warm and lively in praying and wrestling with God in the day of adversity. *Manasseh* got more by prayer in his iron-chains, than ever he got by his golden Crown. Afflictions are like the prick at the Nightingals breast that awakes her, and that puts her upon her sweet and delightful singing. A sincere Christian never prayes so sweetly, as when under the rod. One reports of *Joachim*, the Father of the Virgin *Mary*, that he would often say, *Cibus & potus mihi erit oratio, Prayer is my meat and drink.* When a Christian is in trouble, then prayer is his meat and drink. O what a spirit of prayer was upon *Jonah*, when he was in the Whales belly! and upon *Daniel*

2 Chr. 33. 11, 12, 13. Jonah 2. Dan. 6. Ps. 84. Luke 23. 42. 2 Ch. 20. 1. to the 13. Isa. 37. 14. to the 22. Gen. 32. 6. to the 13. and from v. 24. to 32. now he oyles the Key of prayers with tears, Hos. 12. 4.

niel, when he was among the Lyons! and upon *David*, in his wilderness-state! and upon the Thief, when he was on the Cross! and upon *Jehoshophat*, when *Moab* and *Ammon*, and others, came against him to battel! and upon *Hezekiah*, when *Sennacherib* had invaded *Judah*! and upon *Jacob*, when his brother *Esau* came to meet him with four hundred bloody cut-throates at his heels! As there be two kind of antidotes against poyson, *viz.* hot and cold, so there are two kind of antidotes against all the troubles of this life, *viz.* fervent Prayer and holy Patience; the one hot, the other cold; the one quenching, the other quickning. When a Christian under great troubles, deep distresses, and most deadly dangers, prayes more for the sanctification of affliction, than the removal of affliction; when he prayes more to get off his sins, than to get off his chains; when he prayes more to get good by the rod, than to get free from the rod; when he prayes more that his afflictions may be a refining fire, than a consuming fire, and that his heart may be low, and his graces high, and that all his troubles may wean him more from this World, and ripen him the more for the glory of that upper World: It is a great demonstration of the signal presence of God with him in all his troubles, and deep distresses. But,

Eleventhly, the Lord doth manifest his favourable, signal, and eminent presence with his People, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, by drawing the hearts of his People nearer and closer to himself, by all the afflictions, troubles, distresses, and dangers, that do attend them in this World. *Psalm* 119. 67. *Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy Word.* God brought *David* nearer to himself, by weeping cross. Affliction is fire to purge out our dross, and to make virtue shine. It is a potion to carry away ill humours, better than all the *benedicta Medicamenta*, as Physicians call them. Master *Ascham* was a good Schoolmaster to Queen *Elizabeth*: but affliction was a better, &c. By afflictions God humbles the hearts

Chrysostom.

of his People, and bettels the hearts of his People, and draweth the hearts of his People nearer and closer to himself, V. 71. *It is good for me that I have been afflicted.* The Lacedemonians of old grew rich by war, and were bettered by it, when all other Kingdoms were undone by it. The Saints gain by their crosses, troubles, and distresses. Their graces are more raised, their experiences are more multiplyed, and their comforts are more augmented, and their communion with God is more heightned. The waves did but lift *Noah*'s Ark nearer to Heaven, and the higher the waters grew, the more the Ark was lifted up to Heaven. The troubles and distresses that the Saints meet with, do but raise them in their fellowship with the Father, Son, and Spirit. When *Tyribazus* a noble Persian, was arrested, at first he drew out his sword and defend himself; but when they charged him in the Kings name, and informed him, that they came from the King to carry him to the King, he yeelded willingly: So when afflictions arrest a noble Christian, he may murmur and struggle at the first, but when he considers it is sent from God to bring him to the sight of God, the King of glory, he willingly and readily submits to the rod, and kisses the rod. All the stones that came thick about *Stephens* ears, did but knock him the closer to Christ the Corner-stone. *Tiburtius* saw Paradise when he walked upon burning coals. If there be any way to Heaven on horseback, 'tis by the cross, said *Bradford*. Hos. 2. 6. *Therefore behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths.* By afflictions, difficulties, and distresses God hedges up his Peoples way. Well what then? *Mark*, v. 7. *I will go and return to my first Husband*, that is to God; I have run away from him by my sins, and now I will return to him again by repentance. The grand design of God, in all the afflictions that befal his People, is to bring them nearer and closer to himself. The Church could have no rest at home, nor no comfort abroad till by affliction she was brought into the presence and company of her

Rom. 5. 3, 4. 2 Cor. 1. 3, 4, 5. Hos. 2. 14.

Psalm 73. 13, 14, 28.

Acts 7. 55. 60.

first

first Husband, *Hos.* 6. 1. *Come and let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.* The great design of God in playing the Lyons part with his People, is to bring them nearer & closer to himself; and behold, how sweetly this blessed design of God did take [*Come & let us return unto the Lord*, &c.] The power of God, the presence of God, and the grace of God, is most gloriously manifested, by bringing the hearts of his People nearer and closer to himself by all the troubles, distresses, and dangers that do attend them. In the Winter-season all the sap of the tree runs down to the root, and when a man is sick all the blood goes to the heart: so in the winter of affliction when the soul is running out more and more to God, and a getting closer and nearer to God; it is all most sure evidence of the signal presence of God with that soul. But,

Hos. 5. 14.

Twelfthly and lastly, the Lord doth manifest his favourable, signal, and eminent presence with his People in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers; by rendering them invincible and unconquerable under all their troubles, distresses, and dangers, *Rev.* 12. 11. *And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death.* By vertue of Christ's blood, the Saints are made victorious both over Satan and all his instruments, they set little by their lives in respect of Christ & his truth, yea they despised them in comparison of Gods glory, and the great things of the Gospel; they made so little account of them, that they exposed them to all hazards and dangers for the cause of Christ. In the dayes of that bloody persecutour *Diocletian*, the Christians shewed as glorious power in the faith of Martyrdom, as in the faith of Miracles. The valour of the patients, and the savagness of the persecutors, striving together, till both exceeding nature and belief, bred wonder and astonishment in beholders and readers. It was a good saying of *Cyprian*, speaking of the Saints and

Rev. 14. 1, 2, 3, 4, 2 Chr. 32. 7, 8, 21, 22.

Sulpitius. *Rupertus* saith, that God did more gloriously triumph in Saint *Lawrence* his patience and constancy, when he was broiled on the Gridiron, than if he had saved his body from burning by a miracle. His faith and patience made him invincible.

and Martyrs in those dayes, *Occidi poterant, sed vinci non poterant; They may kill them, but they cannot overcome them.* Rev. 17. 14. *These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is the Lord of Lords, and King of Kings; and they that are with him are called and chosen, and faithful.* The presence of the Lamb has and will make the Saints victorious in all the ages of the World. *Modestus*, Lieutenant to *Julian* the Emperour, said to *Julian*, While they suffer they deride us (saith he) and the torments are more fearful to them that stand by, than to the tormented; there is no end in instances of this nature. There is nothing more clear in Scripture and in History than this, that the signal presence of the Lord with his People, in all their great troubles, deep distresses, and most deadly dangers, hath made them invincible and unconquerable. But now others that have been destitute of this favourable, signal, and eminent presence of the Lord, in times of great troubles, deep distresses, and most deadly dangers, how have they fled when none have pursued them! how faint-hearted, how greatly daunted, and how sadly discouraged have they been! how have they turn'd their backs, and quitted the field, and run from their colours, without striking one stroke. Many in *Cyprian*'s time, were overcome before the encounter, for they revolted to Idolatry, before any persecution once assailed them. In the *Palatinat*, when there was a warm persecution, scarce one Professor of twenty stood out, but fell to Popery, as fast as leaves fall from the trees in Autumn. And so in the persecution under *Decius*, many Professors that were rich and great in the World, they soon shrunk from Christ, and turn'd their backs upon his wayes. It is Gods favourable, signal, and eminent presence with his People, that makes them stand to it in an evil day. Rom. 8. 31. *If God be for us, who can be against us?* That is, none; but this is a more forcible denying, *Who can?* Doest thou *Paul* ask, *Who can?* I'll tell thee: The Devil can, and Tyrants can, and Informers can, and Persecutors can, and

and the whole World can; but *videndus est furor inanis*, *They are as nothing, and can do nothing against us.* Wicked men may set themselves against the Saints, but they shall not prevail against the Saints. What if all the world should strive to hinder the Sun from rising or shining, or the wind from blowing, or the rain from falling, or like those Pigmies, which went with their arrows and bows to repress the flowing of the Sea: Ludibrious acts, and meer follies. All that wicked men can do against the People of God, will be but as throwing stones against the wind. [*If God be with us, who can be against us?*] Me thinks these are words of great resolution; as if he should say, we have many enemies, and powerful enemies, and daring enemies, and malitious enemies, and designing enemies, and enraged enemies, yet let the proudest of them shew their faces, and lift up their banners, I fear them not, I regard them not: *Who can?* who dare be against us? Let me give a little light into this precious Scripture. [*If God be for us, who can be against us?*] that is none.

First, None can be so against us, as to hurt us or harm us; therefore *Aquinas* well expounds that, *Quis contra nos?* (i. e.) *Quis efficaciter?* and others, *Quis lesivè & prevalenter?* who can be against us, so as to hurt us? *Act.* 18. 9. *Then spoke the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, be not afraid but speak, and hold not thy peace.* Verse 10. *For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee, to hurt thee, for I have much people in this City.* God had many Souls in this City to convert, and to bring in to Christ, and therefore he animates and encourages *Paul* to preach boldly and to go on in his work undauntedly. I but Lord there be many in the City, that will set themselves against me. I but I am with thee. I but Lord there be many in the City, that will hate me. I but there is no Man that shall set on thee, to hurt thee. They may kill me, said *Socrates* of his Enemies, but they cannot hurt me. It was the speech of *Anaxarchus* a Heathen, when as he by the Tyrant

Dan. 3. 15. 27. Cap. 6. 22.

What said *Justin* Martyr to his murtherers in the behalf of himself and his fellow-Martyrs? you may kill us, but you can never hurt us.

rant he was commanded to be put in a Mortar, and be beaten to pieces with an Iron pestel, he cries out to the Persecutors, you do but beat the vessel of *Anaxarchus*, you do not beat me, nor hurt me; you do but beat the case, the husk, the vessel that contains another thing: his body was to him but as a case, a husk, he counted his soul himself, which his persecutors could not reach nor hurt. Though there were many in the City of *Corinth* that would be ready furiously to set on *Paul*, yet there should not be a man that should be able to hurt *Paul*; God would be his life-guard to protect him, and he would make void all the mischievous designs, and endeavours of his adversaries against him. When in a City the Lord hath those that are ordained to Salvation, he will bless the labours of his faithful Servants with happy success: so that faithful Ministers may not, yea must not, for fear of the invincible malice of some, neglect the Salvation of others. All the Arrows that Men of might and malice should shoot at *Paul* in the City of *Corinth*, should never reach him, they should never hurt him, nor harm him, 1 *Pet.* 3. 13. *And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?* They may oppose you, but they cannot harm you; they may hate you, but they cannot harm you; they may plot and devise mischief against you, but they cannot harm you; they may persecute you, but they cannot harm you. I know *Cæsar* told *Metellus*, that he could as easily take away his life, as bid it be done; but these were only bravado's, for that is a Royalty which belongs to God only (*To whom belong the issues of death*,) or the goings out from death, that is deliverances from death and deadly dangers. It is an allusion to one that keepeth a passage or a door, that is God hath all the wayes which lead out from death in his own keeping. Christ hath the keys of death, the sole dominion and disposal of it; the Lord knows how to deliver his People from the most desperate and deadly dangers, he can deliver them out of the mouth of the

Psalm 68. 20.

Revel. 1. 18. 2 Pet. 2. 9.

Lion,

Lion, he can pull them out of the jaws of death, and so secure them from all harm or hurt, none can be so against the People of God as to harm their souls, as to hurt their happiness: But

(*If God be with us, who can be against us?*) I answer,

Secondly, None can be so against us, as to prevail over us; the Gates of hell may fight against us, but the Gates of hell cannot prevail against us: Christ is the Captain of your Salvation, God hath made him General of the Field, and therefore you may be sure that he will stand by you, and bring you off with honour; you need never fear having the day, who have Christ your Captain for your second; though your persecutors are as so many roaring Lions, yet Christ who is the Lion of the Tribe of *Judah*, will make you victorious over them all. In all storms and tempests the Church will stand fast, because it stands upon a rock. God is on *Zions* side, and the Enemies of *Zion* must first prevail against *Zions* God: Before they can prevail over *Zion* her self, *Zions* God will be a wall of fire about her, and therefore *Zions* Enemies shall never prevail over her: Were *Zions* shelter stones, these might be battered; were it walls of lead, these might be melted; were it a defence of waters, these might be dryed up; were it garrisons of mighty men, these might be scattered; were it engines of war, these might be defeated; were it trenches, these might be stopped; were it bulwarks, these might be overthrown: But *Zion* is guarded with a wall of fire round about her, and therefore all her opposers can never prevail over her: The Enemies of *Zion* are weak Enemies, they are infatuated Enemies, they are conquered Enemies, they are limited Enemies, they are chained Enemies, they are cursed Enemies, and they are naked Enemies, and therefore they shall never be prevalent Enemies over *Zion* *Pharaoh* followed the Israelites, but he and his mighty men were drowned, and Israel delivered, for God was with them. *Saul* hunted *David* as a Partridge in the Mountains, but *Saul* pe-

2.

Matth. 16. 18. Heb. 2. 10. Jer. 1. 19. Cap. 20. 11.

Revel. 5. 5. Psalm 129. 2.

Zach. 2. 5. Deut. 33. 26, 27, 28, 29.

2 Chron. 32. 7, 8. Rom. 8. 37. Genes. 3. 12. Num. 14. 9.

Exod. 14.

1 Sam. 26. 20.

perisheth, and *David* was crowned, for God was with him. *Haman* hated *Mordecai*, and plotted against *Mordecai*, but *Haman* is hanged and *Mordecai* advanced, for God was with him. The Presidents and Princes inform against *Daniel*, and plot against *Daniel*, but they are by the Lions torn and devoured, and *Daniel* is delivered and exalted, for God was with him. *Herod* kills *James* with the sword, and imprisons *Peter*, but *Herod* is devoured by worms, and *Peter* is delivered out of prison by an Angel, for God was with him. Let Atheists, Papists and Persecutors cease from plotting against *Zion*, from persecuting of *Zion*, for it is utterly impossible to prevail against *Zion*. Let all *Zions* Adversaries remember once for all, that if any Policy, counsel, lying, cunning, strength or cruelty could have prevailed against *Zion*, *Zion* had been rooted out of the world long ago. If *Balaam* was at our Enemies elbows, he would tell them roundly and plainly, *That it is in vain to curse those whom God blesseth. It is hard to kick against the pricks*: It is high madness for men to run their naked Bodies against a swords point. Let *Zions* Enemies remember that God, who takes pleasure in *Zion*, sits upon the Circle of the Earth, and all the Inhabitants are as Grashoppers, yea all the Nations as a drop of a Bucket, and less than the dust of the Ballance, and therefore he can easily revenge all the wrongs and injuries that is done to *Zion*, by those that would fain prevail over her, and triumph in her ruin. But,

Hesther 6. 7.

Dan. 6.

Acts 12.

Num. 23. 8.

Acts 9. 5.

Isa. 40, 22. 15. 17.

Some observe that *Pauls* Stile is so beautified with wonderful Eloquence and Rhetorick, that not *Tully*, nor *Demosthenes* could ever have so spoken, *August. Erasmus.* Some report of *Augustin* that he wished for three things: 1. To see Christ in the flesh. 2. To see *Rome* in the pride of it. 3. To have heard *Paul* preach.

Thirdly, (*If God be with us, who can be against us?*) I answer, None can be so against us, as to be able to separate us from the love of God, and the love of Christ. *Rom.* 8. 35. *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distresses, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?* Verse 36. (*As it is written, for thy sake are we killed all the day long: we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*) Verse 37. *Nay in all these things we are more than conquerers, through him that loved us.* Verse 38. *For I am perswaded, that neither death*

death, nor life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come. Verſe 39. *Nor height, nor depth, nor any other Creature, ſhall ſeparate us from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus.* It is not the pleaſures of life nor the pains of death, it is not evils felt nor evils feared, it is not the height of proſperity nor the depth of adverſity, it is not bonds nor baniſhment, it is not power nor policy, honour nor baſeneſs, it is not violent perſecutions nor multiplyed tribulations; it is not the ſcorns of men, nor reproaches of men, nor revilings of men, nor deſigns of men, nor any thing elſe, that can ſeparate us from the love of the Father or the love of the Son. In the 35. Verſe is a poſition, that no croſſes nor creatures can deprive us of the love of God, which is ſet down in a double interrogation, that he might add the more force and life to it, and raviſh the Readers: *Who ſhall ſeparate us?* That is none can: But he ſpeaks with contempt, *Who ſhall? ſhall tribulation?* as if he ſhould ſay, I ſcorn it; As *Goliah* defied *David*, ſaying, *Doeſt thou come to me with a ſtaff?* ſo *Paul* with a better Spirit defies all croſſes, ſufferings, trials, *&c.* as things not able to deprive ſincere Chriſtians of Chriſts love; *ſhall tribulation, &c.* He had before ſpoken of Perſons, now here he ſpeaks of things, becauſe Satan and his ſworn Slaves think by ſuch things to ſeparate between God and his People. *Chryſoſtome* obſerves *Paul*'s wiſdome in three things: 1. That he ſaith not, Shall the love of riches, pleaſures, honours, *&c.* which have a mighty force in them to bewitch us; but *ſhall tribulation, diſtreſs, &c.* 2. That he begins with the lighter, and ſo riſeth to greater troubles, placing them in this order not caſually, but by ſingular art. 3. That though theſe which he here rehearſeth, conſiſt of a certain number, yet every one as a General hath ſpecial Troops under it: As when he ſaith Tribulation, he ſaith, imſpriſonments, bonds, ſlanders, baniſhments, &c. *Shall tribulation, diſtreſs, perſecution?* &c. No: They are bleſſed which endure theſe things. Matth. 5. 10. 11.

things. Shall famine? He which feeds on Christ, shall never perish for hunger. Shall nakedness? Christs righteousness is my cloathing; I shall willingly follow him even naked, who when he was cloathed with infinit glory as with a garment, was content to be born naked, and to be stript on the Cross for my sake. Shall peril? I know the hardest. Shall the sword? Christ is to me in life and death advantage. But,

Fourthly, [*If God be for us, who can be against us?*] I answer, None can be against us so as to bring us to their bow, their beck, their will, their humour, their lusts. 1 *Kings* 19. 18. *Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him*: That is, I have many thousands that have not worshipped *Baal*. Here a set number is put for an indefinite number, he means a very great number. Idolaters used not only to bow & kneel before their Idols, but also to kiss them, according to that *Hos.* 13. 2. *Let the men that sacrifice kiss the Calves*. *Cicero* saith, that the chin of the image of *Hercules* was much worn with the kisses of them that adored him. Now God had several thousands of true Israelites indeed, that had not in the least kind polluted themselves with the Idolatrie of *Baal*. The denial of bowing the knee, and kissing with the mouth shewes, that Gods faithful Servants were so far from setting their hearts upon *Baal*, as that they would not make the least shew of any affection or subjection to him. These good souls had too great spirits to be conformable to the Idolatry of the times. *Jeroboam* with his eight hundred thousand chosen men, his Popish Priests, and his golden Calves, could not bring *Judah* to his bow. *Nebuchadnezzar* nor his Princely Informers, nor his fiery Furnace, could never bring the three Children to his bow; the three Champions would be Non-conformists, though Court, City, and Country were violent for Conformity. Neither *Darius*, his Presidents, nor Princes, could ever bring *Daniel* to their bow; *Daniel* would keep off from idolatry,

Kissing was an outward token 1. of great and entire affection. 2. of submissive reverence. 3. of willing and ready subjection.

2 Chr. 13. 3, 20.

Dan. 3.

Dan. 6.

latry, and keep cloſe to his God, and cloſe to his duty, let all his enemies do their worſt. The Rulers and Elders of Iſrael charged the Apoſtles, and threatned the Apoſtles, and beat the Apoſtles, and commanded the Apoſtles, that they ſhould not ſpeak in the Name of Jeſus; but they could never bring them to their bow: For *they departed from the preſence of the Council, rejoycing that they were counted worthy, to ſuffer ſhame for his Name, and daily in the Temple, and in every houſe they ceaſed not to teach and preach Jeſus Chriſt.* *Pharaoh* by all his oppreſſions could never bring Iſrael to his bow; Nor *Saul* by all his perſecutions, could never bring *David* to his bow; Nor *Haman* by all his plots and deſigns could never bring *Mordecai* to his bow; and *Paul* will rather dye upon the ſpot, than be brought to his enemies bow. The ten perſecuting Emperours could never bring the primitive Chriſtians to their bow; Nor the bloody, fierce, and fiery Papiſts could never bring the Martyrs to their bow, as you may ſee through out the Books of Martyrs. Among the many hundred inſtances that are there, I ſhall only refreſh your memory with this one: There were Endeavours to bring *Hawkes* to their bow, but all in vain; at laſt ſome of his Chriſtian Friends deſired him for their encouragment and confirmation to give ſome token when he was in the flames (a ſtrange time one would think to attend upon ſigns by Friends) whether pains were tolerable, or no. He was bound to the ſtake, fire put to the wood, it burns, it flames, it conſumes his fleſh, his eyes ſtart out of his head, his fingers are conſumed with the fire; and when every one thought him dead, expecting the fall of his body: lo, ſuddenly he lifts up his ſtumps, and thrice as a famous conquerour, he claps them over his head. In this he was more than a Conquerour.

Acts 3. ibid. 4. and 5.

Acts 5. 41, 42.

Acts 20. 22, 23 24. cap. 21. 13.

Fox Acts and Mon. p. 1447.

In former times the ſenſe of the love of God, made the Martyrs eſteem Tyrants as gnats and fleas, and torments as the fleabitings. *Tertullian* ſpeaking of his times ſaith, that to be accuſed was the wiſh of Chriſtians, and puniſhment for Chriſt they counted felicity, A certain Woman

Acciſatio votumeſt, & pœna felicitas. Tert. adverſ. Gent.

man running in all haſt with her child in her arms; being asked the cauſe, O, ſaith ſhe, I hear a great ſort of Chriſtians are appointed to be martyred, and I am afraid leſt I and my little one come too late. When the Emperour *Valens* baniſhed *Baſil*, and the Tribune threatned his death, I would (ſaid *Baſil*) I had any thing of worth, I would beſtow it on him that ſhould cut *Baſil*'s windpipe; and when he had that night given him to deliberate, he anſwered, That he ſhould be the ſame man to morrow, and wiſhed that the Tribune would not be changed. *Chryſoſtome* being in baniſhment by the means of *Eudoxia* the Empreſs, wrote to a Biſhop called *Cyriacus*, and upon occaſion, tells of his reſolution before he was baniſhed, I thought with my ſelf (ſaith he) that if ſhe will baniſh me, the Earth is the Lords; if ſhe will ſaw me aſunder, I remembred the Prophet *Eſay*; if drown me, *Jonas* came to my mind; if ſtone me, I thought of *Stephen*; if behead me, of *John* Baptiſt; if take away my goods, *Naked came I out of my mothers womb.* By all which you may clearly ſee, that let the wicked do their worſt, they can never bring the Saints to their bow. But,

Fifthly, [*If God be with us, who can be againſt us?*] I anſwer, none, ſo as to hinder the operation of all things for our good. When men and devils have done their worſt, all the great troubles, deep diſtreſſes, and moſt deadly dangers, that do attend the Saints, ſhall work for their good. Rom. 8. 28. *And we know that all things work together, for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpoſe.* In this Verſe there are two things obſervable. Firſt, a propoſition, or a glorious priviledge, *All things work together for good*; This word συνεργεῖ εἰς, *Work together*, is a phyſical expreſſion; ſeveral poyſonful ingredients put together, being tempered by the skilful Apothecary, make a ſoveraign medicine, and work together for the good of the Patient; they work together, not *invicem*, *between themſelves*, but together with God; not of their own nature, for ſo they

I have read of a Jewiſh Rabbin, who would ſtill ſay, it was good what ever befel him, when he met with a croſs, he would ſay, it was good, when he met with a loſs, he would ſay, it is good.

they do not co-operate, but contra-operate, but being sanctified by God. And therefore one takes the verb passively, are wrought; for indeed take away God, and afflictions work for our hurt; but all Gods providences being divinely tempered and sanctified, do work together for the best to the People of God. When the worst of men have done their worst against the Saints, all things shall sweetly concur, yea conspire for their good; 2. The proof which is double. 1. From the experience of all Saints, *We know*, it is not a matter pendulous, or doubtful. The Apostle doth not say, We think; but, *We know*. Nor he doth not say, We hope; but, *We know*. Nor he doth not say, We guess, we conjecture; but, *We know*. Nor he doth not say, We desire that all things may work together for good; but, *We know all things work together for good*. Nor he doth not say, We pray that all things may work together for good; but, *We know all things work together for good*. The wicked know not this secret, as the Philistins understood not *Sampsons* riddles; but we know that all the world shall not hinder the cross from working for our good. 2. From a description of them that love God; they are called according to Gods purpose: That is, God hath purposed the salvation of his People, he hath chosen them to salvation, and called them to it; and therefore it must needs be, that all these afflictions that befall his People, must work together for their internal and eternal good; otherwise he should do that which should cross his own purpose, which wise men will not do, and, O how much less will the most wise God act counter cross to his own purpose? So *Jer.* 24. 5. *Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Like these good Figs so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the Land of the Caldeans for their good.* To be carried captive to *Babylon* was doubtless a very sore and match-less affliction. *Dan* 9. 12. *And he hath confirmed his words which he spake against us, and against our Judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil, for under the whole*

Judg. 14. 12, 13, 14.

Hea-

Heaven hath not been done, as hath been done upon Jerusalem. This may be the abridgment of *Jeremiah's* Lamentations, *Lam.* 1. 12. *Is it nothing to you all ye that pass by? Behold and see, If there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.* Cap. 4. 16. *For the punishment of the iniquity of the Daughter of my People, is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom, that was overthrown as in a moment, and no hands stayed on her.* *Sodom* sustained not any siege from forreign forces, they were not vexed and plagued with the Armies of the Chaldeans; there was no hand of man in the destruction of *Sodom*, but a hand of Heaven only. *Sodom* was not kept long in pains and misery as I and my People have been, but was suddenly overwhelmed, and in an instant dispatched; all which shews that their miseries and sufferings were incomparable and matchless, and that they were so indeed will evidently appear, if you please but seriously to consider either the antecedents of it, or the consequents of it. The antecedents of it: what went before their captivity, *viz.* blood, and slaughter, and dreadful devastations. Or if you consider the consequents of it: as, 1. The enslaving of their persons, under a fierce and most cruel enemy. 2. The loss of their estates. 3. The leaving of their Country, and the Land of their nativity. 4. A deprivation of the ordinances and worship of God. 5. The scorns and reproaches, the exaltations and triumphs of their adversaries, that pleased and delighted themselves in their captivity and misery. These were the woful consequences of that captivity, and yet all the power and malice of men in the world could not hinder these amazing and astonishing tryals from working together for the spiritual, and everlasting good of his captive People. That God will do his People good by the most terrible dispensations that they are under, you may see more and more evident by comparing the Scriptures in the margin together. As the Apothecary of poyson makes Triacle, to drive out poyson:

See Psal. 137. 7. Obadiah 12. 13, 14, 15, 16. Ezek. 25. 6. Psal. 44. 13, 14.

Deut. 8. 15, 16. Psal. 119. 71, 75. Heb. 12. 10.

so

so can God make the poyson of afflictions (which in themselves are the curse of the Law) to drive out the poyson of sin. All the world can never hinder the affliction, troubles, and evils that befal the People of God, from working for their good; for God do's and will by these means, 1. Discover sin. 2. Prevent sin. 3. Imbitter sin. 4. Mortify sin. And God will by afflictions, troubles, *&c.* 1. Revive, quicken, and recover his Childrens decayed graces. 2. Exercise his Childrens graces. 3. Increase his Childrens graces. 4. Make a further tryal and discovery of his Childrens graces. Let the enemies of *Sion* storm and rage, plot and combine, *&c.* yet they shall never be able to hinder the greatest troubles, the deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, from working for the internal and eternal good of all the sincere lovers of God. I have read a story of one *Perseus*, who running at another with a sword to kill him, by accident the sword only ran into his impostume, and broke that; and so he was instrumental to save him, whom he design'd to have kill'd: And so all the afflictions and troubles that the righteous meet with, they do but serve to cure them of the impostume of pride, or of the impostume of earthly mindedness, or of the impostume of self love, or of the impostume of hypocrisy. Look upon the revolution of the Heavens how every Planet moves in its proper orb; their motions are not alike, but various, nay opposite each unto the other, hence those different conjunctions, oppositions, and aspects of the Planets, yet by the wheeling round of the *primum mobile*, they are brought about to one determinate point. The People of God have many enemies in the World, whose course and scope, whose aims, and ends, and actions are not the same, yea divers, nay advers, one thwarting and crossing the other, yet the overruling providence so swayes all subordinate and inferiour instruments and enemies, that in the midst of their mutual jars they conspire in a sacred harmony, as if they were entred into a holy-league, or some sacred combination

See my London's Lamentations, p. 34. to p. 53. See also my Mute Christian under the smarting Rod.

for the good of his Chosen; where ever our Enemies be in respect of their places, whosoever they be in regard of their Persons, and however they are disjoyned in regard of their affections, yet all their projects and pra[illegible] shall tend and end in the good of those that love God. But

6. Sixthly, (*If God be with us, who can be against us?*) I answer, None; as to hinder our communion and fellowship with the Father, Son, and Spirit. 1 *John* 1.3. *That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.* Mans *summum bonum* stands in his Communion with God, as Scripture and experience evidences. A Man whose soul is conversant with God, shall find more pleasure in a desart, in a den, in a dungeon, in a fiery furnace, yea, and in the valley of the shadow of death, than in the Palace of a Prince. There is a sweet and intimate Communion which Believers have with God; hence they are said to *walk with God*, *Genes.* 5. 24. cap. 6. 9. and to *talk with God*, as *Moses* frequently did, and to *dwell in God*, 1 *John* 4. 15. And to *sup with God*, *Rev.* 3. 20. And to *lodge with God*, *Cant.* 7. 11. The nearness of this fellowship which we have with the Father, is represented by a gradation of allusions in Scripture, all which do excellently illustrate this truth. There is some kind of participation that a Servant hath with his Master, yet greater is that which one Friend hath with another, but yet greater is that which a Son hath with the Father, but greatest of all is that which the Bride hath with the Bridegroom. Now in all these relations we stand to the Father; we are his Servants and he is our Lord, *Exod* 12. 7. We are his friends, *John* 15. 14, 15. *Jam.* 2. 23. And he is our friend, *Cant.* 5. 1. an able friend, a sure friend, a faithful friend, a close friend, a constant friend. *Plutarch*'s reasoning is good (τὰ τῶν φιλῶν πάντα κοινὰ) *Friends have all things in common*: But God is our Friend; *Ergo* we can-

Nunquam minus solus, quam cum solus, never less alone than when alone, said the Heathen; and may not a Saint say so much more, that has communion with Father, Son and Spirit. My God and I are good company said famous Doctor *Sibs*.

cannot want, a most rare speech from a poor Heathen; He is our Father, *Isa.* 63. 16. cap. 64 8. And we are his children, *Isa.* 63. 8. He is our Bridegroom, and we are his Bride, *Isa.* 61. 10. *Hosea* 2. 19, 20. *Isa.* 62. 5. And therefore it is no pride nor presumption for Believers to say, our fellowship is with the Father: Our fellowship with Jesus Christ, is set forth by the Parable of the Wedding-Feast, and by the Entertainment of the Prodigal Son, and by such relations or various similitudes, as carry communion in their bosoms, as of the head and the members, root and branches, foundation and building, husband and wife. The head hath communion with the body by sense, influence, motion. The root with the branches, by leaf, sap, and juice. The foundation with the building, by support and strength. The husband with the wife, by love and consent: Thus it is betwixt Christ and the Believers, 1 *Cor.* 1. 9. *God is faithful by whom ye are called, to the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ.* All Believers have fellowship with Christ, whether they be strong or weak, rich or poor, high or low, ripe and well grown, or new born babes, and very tender. The head hath conjunction with all the members, and an influence into all the members, even the little Toes, as well as into the strongest Arms; and the root (in the vertue of it) extends to the weakest branches, as well as to the strongest limbs of the Tree. Communion is as large as union, all Believers are united to Christ, and all Believers have communion with Christ. Though one star exceeds another in magnitude, yet all are alike seated in the heavenly Orbs; and though one member be larger in the body than another, yet every one hath an equal conjunction with the head: And as Believers have fellowship with the Father and the Son, so they have fellowship with the Spirit also; every Believers communion extends to all the Persons in the Trinity. 2 *Cor.* 13. 14. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen.* Now no

Matth. 22. 1, 2, 3. Luke 15.

Gal. 3. 28. 1 Pet. 2. 2. John 17. 20, 21, 22, 23.

Men, no Devils, no wrath, no rage, no malice, no enmity, no afflictions, no oppositions, no persecutions, no troubles, no trials, no bonds, no banishment, can interrupt or hinder a Believers communion with the three Persons in Trinity. But

7. Seventhly, (*If God be with us, who can be against us?*) I answer, None, so as to hinder our private Trade to Heaven: All the world can never hinder a sincere Christian from driving a secret Trade with Heaven, as you may see by comparing the Scriptures in the Margin together. A Christian can as well hear without ears, and live without food, and fight without hands, and walk without feet, as he is able to live without secret Prayer. Secret Prayer is the life of our lives, the soul, the sweet, the heaven of all our enjoyments; of all the duties of Religion: Secret Prayer is the most soul-sweetning, soul-strengthning, soul-nourishing, soul-saving, soul-refreshing, soul-satisfying, and soul-encouraging duty; in all the Ages of the world, the Saints have kept the Trade, in spite of all opposers and persecutors, in prisons, in dungeons, in dens, in bonds, in banishments, on racks, and in the very flames, the Saints have still kept up this secret Trade; as you may see at large in my Treatise on closet Prayer, called *The privy Key of Heaven*, to which I refer you. But

Psalm 3. 2, 3, 4. Psalm 6. 8, 9, 10. Psalm 138. 3. Lam. 3. 55. to 59.

8. Eightly, (*If God be with us, who can be against us?*) I answer, None, so as to deprive us of the sweet Testimonie of our renewed consciences, 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. *For our rejoycing* (or boasting) *is this the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.* They were in great and pressing troubles in *Asia*, Verse the 8. and yet they boasted in the testimony of their consciences; they were under a Sentence of death in themselves, Verse 9: and yet gloried in the testimony of their consciences. Joy of conscience is the greatest joy, as trouble of conscience is the greatest trouble: when

καύχησις, boasting or glorying.

when conscience bears its testimony with us, and for us, how full of joy is the soul, even in the midst of the deepest sorrows, and greatest sufferings! *Conscientia pura semper secura*, a good conscience hath sure confidence, and he that hath it, sits *Noah* like

——*mediis tranquillus in undis*:

Quiet in the greatest combustions; freed if not from the common destruction, yet from the common distraction. A good conscience is an impregnable Fort; it fears no colours, it will enable a man to stand against the fiercest batteries of men and divels. A good conscience will fill a man with courage and comfort, in the midst of all his troubles and distresses. *Paul* had enough to say for himself, when standing before the Council he could say: *Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God, until this day.* And though as soon as he had said so, *Ananias* commanded to smite him on the mouth, yet he bears up bravely, because his conscience did not smite him, but acquit him. That man can never want musick whose conscience speaks in consort, and is harmonious with himself. A good conscience is a Paradise in a wilderness, it is riches in poverty, and health in sickness, and strength in weakness, and liberty in bonds, and life in death. A good conscience will enable a man to triumph over innumerable evils, yea over death it self: Death to such a person is not the King of terrors, but the King of desires. A good conscience will be a Christians best friend in the worst times; it will be a sword to defend him, a staff to support him, a pillar of fire to lead him, a *Joseph* to nourish him, a *Dorcas* to cloath him, a *Canaan* to refresh him, and a feast to delight him: *He that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast*; Now there is nothing that can make a man Divinely merry, below a good conscience. A good conscience (saith one) is *Thalamus Dei, palatium Christi, habitaculum Spiritus Sancti, Paradisus deliciarum*:

Acts 23. 1, 2.

Isa. 38. 3.

Phil. 1. 23.

Prov. 15. 15.

Aug. Ser. 10. ad Fratres in Erem.

rum: The bed of God, the palace of Christ, the habitation of the holy Ghost, the Paradise of delights; and wherein every Tree yieldeth a Feast. *Tranquillitas conscientiæ, & securitas innocentiæ quæcunque mundus bona indicat excellunt: The tranquillity of conscience, and the security of innocence, excell all the things which the world counteth good.* He that hath a good conscience enjoyes a continual serenity, and sits continually at that blessed Feast, whereat the blessed Angels are Cooks and Butlers (as *Luther* hath it) and the three Persons in Trinity glad Guests. All other Feasts to this of a good conscience are stark hunger: the Feast of a good conscience is a full Feast, a noble Feast, a lasting Feast: not for a day, as that of *Nabal*'s; nor for seven dayes, as that of *Sampson*'s; nor of nine-score dayes, as that of *Ahashuerus*, but a durable, continual Feast, without intermission of solace, or interruption of society: The best way in this world for a man, to turn his whole life into a merry festival, is to get and keep a good conscience. The Heathen Philosopher could say, ὁ ἀγαθὸς αἰεὶ ἑορτάζει, *A good man keeps holy-day all the year about.* It was the testimony of a good conscience, that made the Apostles rejoice when they were beaten and abused by the Council. It was the testimony of a good conscience, that made *Paul* and *Silas* to sing in the prison. It was the testimony of a good conscience, that made *Moses* prefer Christ's Cross before *Egypt*'s Crown, and Christs reproaches before *Egypt*'s treasures. It was the testimony of a good conscience, that made those worthies in that 11. of the *Hebrews* more willing to die than to live, to die than to dine. It was the testimony of a good conscience, that made the Martyrs to kiss the stake, to hug their Executioners, to clap their hands in the flames, and to tread upon burning coals as upon beds of Roses. Now it is not in the power or policy of Men or Devils, to deprive a Christian of the testimony of his conscience; and as long as that bird in the bosom sings, no troubles, no trials, no oppositions, no persecutions, no dangers, no death

Ambros. Offic. l. 2. c. 1.

Acts 5. 40. 41. 42. Cap. 16. 25, 26.

Heb. 11. 35.

death can make a Christian miserable. The testimony of a good conscience will make a man triumph over the worst of men, and the worst of sufferings. But

Ninthly, (*If God be with us, who can be against us?*) I answer, None, so as to hinder the help, assistance, and succour of God at a dead lift. *Heb.* 13. 5. *Let your conversation be without covetousness,* (*or without the love of silver*, as the Greek word signifies) *and be content with such things as you have.* [*Contenti præsentibus*, so *Beza*, *Be content with present things.*] The Hebrews had been plundered of all they had, though they had nothing, they must be content. If Men cannot bring their means to their minds, let them bring their minds to their means; a little will serve our turn till we get to Heaven, till we come to our Fathers house: *For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* There are five Negatives in the Greek: I read not the like throughout the New-Testament. In that this promise is set down negatively. [*I will never leave thee,*) this makes the promise to be of a larger extent; for it includes all times, all places, all estates, all dangers, all needs, all distresses whatsoever, as if he had more largely said, thou shalt never stand in need of any of my help & protection, but thou shalt be sure to find it. Affirmative promisses are not of that extent, as negative promisses are; for if a man should promise to assist, help, succour or counsel me, if he do it now and then, or upon some special occasions, he has kept his promise: But negatively for a man to say, I will not fail thee, I will never leave thee, though he should help, assist, succour or stand by me, a hundred, yea a thousand times; and yet fail me but once, that negative promise is not punctually kept, it is not perfectly kept. It is further considerable, that there is a great Emphasis in doubling and trebling a negative particle in Greek: Doubling and trebling Negatives in Greek makes them much the stronger: the doubling of the Negative particle doth in this place carry the greater Emphasis, because in setting down the same thing, it is not only twice doubled,

9.

ἀργύριον τοῖς παροῦσι.

Heb. 10. 34.

οὐ μὴ οὐδ', οὐ μὴ

but

A general promise compriseth all particulars of that kind.

but in the latter place it is trebled, so as there are in all five Negatives, as I have already hinted. These two Phrases *never leave nor forsake*, are so general as they include all the wants, all dangers, all distresses, all necessities, all calamities, all miseries that can befal us in this world. These two Phrases, God's not leaving, God's not forsaking, implie all needful succours. It is more than if he had said, I will supply all thy wants, I will heal all thy diseases, I will secure thee against all sorts of dangers, I will ease thee of all thy pains, I will free thee of all thy oppressors, I will break all thy bonds, I will bring thee out of prison, I will vanquish all thine enemies, I will knock off all thy chaines, and I will make thee triumph over all thy sufferings; for these generals comprise all manner of particulars under them. Verse 6. *So that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.* In this Verse there is an inference made upon the former promise of God's not leaving, nor forsaking his; the conjunction (*so that*) implieth an inference, and such an inference in this place, as teacheth us to make a good use of the forenamed promise: The use here set down is double; the first is confidence in God (*the Lord is my helper.*) Secondly, courage against Man, (*I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*) Assurance of Gods presence to help at a dead lift, should raise us up above all base and slavish fears of the power of men, of the spoilings of men, of the designs of men, &c. God being with us, and for us, and on our side, we may boldly, safely, and confidently rest upon it, that he will freely, readily, graciously afford all needful help, assistance and succour, when we are in the greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers. The Greek word βοηθὸς, (*Helper*) according to the notation of it, signifies one that is ready to run at the cry of another: This notation implies, a willing readiness, and a ready willingness in God, to help and succour his People, when they are at a dead lift. You know the

Psalm 118. 6.

&c.

tender

tender Father, the indulgent Mother, the careful Nurse, they presently run when any of them hears the Child cry, or sees the Child in any danger or distress; so when God sees his poor Children in any danger or distress, when he hears them complain and cry out of their sufferings, their bonds, their burdens, their oppressions, their dangers, &c. he presently runs to their relief and succour. *Psalm* 33. *Our soul waiteth for the Lord: he is our help and our shield.* Psalm 49. 17. *Thou art my deliverer: God is the Lord of Hosts, with him alone is strength and power, to deliver Israel out of all his troubles.* He may do it, he can do it, he will do it, he is wise in heart and mighty in strength; besides him there is no Saviour, no deliverer; he is a shield to the righteous, strength to the weak, a refuge to the oppressed; he is *Instar omnium*, *All in all*; who is like him in all the world, to help his People at a dead lift? when Friends can't help, when power can't help, when policy can't help, when riches can't help, when Princes can't help, when Parliaments can't help, yet then God can and will help his People, when all humane help fails. *For the Lord shall judge his People, and repent himself for his Servants, when he seeth that their power* (or hand) *is gone, and there is none shut up or left.* When Gods People are at the very brink of ruin, then God will come in seasonably to their help, their extremity shall be his opportunity to succour his People, and to judge their Enemies: no men, no divels, no power, no policy can hinder God from helping, aiding, assisting, and succouring of his People, when they are at a dead lift. But.

Exod. 2. 23, 24, 25. Cap. 3. 7, 8, 9, 10.

Psalm 9. 7, 8. Esay. 43. 11. Psalm 5. 12. Psalm 22. 12. 2 Kings 6. 26, 27

Deut. 32. 36.

Tenthly, (*If God be with us, who can be against us?*) I answer, None, so as to hinder the springs of joy and comfort, from rising and flowing in their Souls. *Psalm* 71. 20. *Thou which hast shewed me great and sore troubles shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the Earth.* Verse 21. *Thou shalt encrease my greatness and comfort me on every side.* The Psalmist

10.

was in those desperate dangers, that he seemed to be as a man that was dead and buried, and yet he had faith enough to believe, that God would surround him with cordials, and supply him with comforts from all sides; there is no true comfort to be drawn out of the standing pools of outward sufficiences, but out of the living fountains of the all-sufficiences of the Lord Almighty. *Thou shalt comfort me on every side.* Psalm 94. 19. *In the multitude of my thoughts within me,* (or of my careful, troubled, perplexed thoughts, as the word properly signifies) *thy comforts delight my soul.* As the Psalmist alwayes found God a present help, so he alwayes found him a present comfort in the day of troubles; God never did, nor never will want a cordial, to revive and keep up the Spirits of his people from fainting and sinking in an evil day; when the Psalmist was under many griefs, cares, fears, and perplexities of Spirit: God came in with those comforts that did delight his soul, and chear up his Spirits. The word of the Lord is never more a word of comfort, nor the Spirit of the Lord is never more a Spirit of comfort, than when the Saints are in their deepest distresses, and sorest perplexities, *John* 14. 16. *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.* Verse 26. *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my Name. Hudson* the Martyr being at the stake, he went from under his chain, and having prayed earnestly, he was so comforted and refreshed by the Holy Spirit, that he suffered valiantly and cheerfully. The Holy Ghost is called again and again the Comforter, because his office is to work consolation in the hearts of Gods People, in all their troubles and distresses. Spiritual comfort is therefore called *joy in the Holy Ghost*, because the Holy Ghost doth create it in the soul. When a man suffers for righteousnes sake, God comes with his cordials in the very nick of time, when a mans suffering is upon the account of Christ, God seldom fails to send the Comforter for the refreshing and reli-

Psal. 119. 49, 50.

Rom. 14. 17.

1 Pet. 4. 13.

relieving of his Spirit. When a man is under bodily confinement, for the cause of Christ, God will never fail to be a Spring of life, a Well of Salvation and breasts of consolation to him. When a Christian is brought to a piece of bread, then is the season for God to feed him with heavenly Manna. I have told you of Mr. *Glover*, who found no comfort in the time of his imprisonment, but when he was going to the stake, he cried out to his Friend, *He is come, he is come*, meaning the Comforter. *Hab.* 3. 17. *Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls.* Vers. 18. *Yet I will rejoyce in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.* In these words you have these two parts: 1. A sad supposition. *Although the fig-tree shall not blossom*, &c. 2. A noble and comfortable resolution, *yet I will rejoyce in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.* Let me first hint a little at the sad supposition, *Although the fig-tree should not blossom*, &c.

Isa. 12. 3. cap. 66 11.

First, though there should be a famin in that Land, that of all Lands was the most plentiful & fruitful Land, yet *Habakkuk* would rejoyce in the Lord, and joy in the God of his salvation. The Land of *Canaan* of all Lands was the fruitfullest; 'twas as the garden of God; 'twas a Land that flowed with milk and honey, a Land of vineyards, the best of all Lands, as *Moses* describes it; A Land that brought forth to *Isaac* no less than a hundred fold; It was so rich a Land, that it was the granary of other neighbouring Cities, and Countries, it had not only plenty for it self, but bounty for others. Yet now when God shall turn a Paradise into a Wilderness, *Habakkuk* will rejoyce in the Lord, and joy in the God of his salvation. But,

Deut. 8. 7, 8, 9. cap 32. 13, 14. Gen 26. 12. 1 King. 5. 11. Acts 12. 20.

Secondly; when the anger and wrath of God shall cause a dearth in those fruits, that naturally are most yielding and pleasant, yet then *Habakkuk* would rejoyce in the Lord, and joy in the God of his salvation. The fig-tree of all trees is most fruitful, bringing forth of its

own accord with the least care and culture, fructifying in the most barren and stony places, bearing twice a year, soonest ripening, and rarely failing; So the vine, thats a fruitful plant, 'tis made the emblem of plenty and fruitfulness. Now when there shall be a dearth upon these pleasant fruits, yet then *Habakkuk* will rejoyce in the Lord, and joy in the God of his salvation. But,

Thirdly, another print of Divine displeasure in the scarcity threatned is, that it is a national famine, a general famine, an overspreading famine, usually if one part of the Land suffers scarcity, other parts abound with plenty, but when God calls for a famine, he turns a whole Land into a desart, into a barren wilderness: *Bashan* languisheth, and *Carmel*, and the flower of *Lebanon* languisheth; these were the richest soyl of all the Country, yet these were parched up, and fruitless by his displeasure, and yet for all this *Habakkuk* will rejoyce in the Lord, and joy in the God of his salvation. But,

Psal. 107. 33. 34. Nahum. 1. 4.

Fourthly, another print of Divine displeasure is this, that the Lord makes it an universal scarcity upon all kind of foods, and supports of life; here is the staff of bread broken, and the herds and flocks fail, and the refreshing of the wine press, the seed and the vine, and the fig-tree and the olive-tree, all become fruitless; such a desolation is more than ordinary, usually when one commodity fails, another abounds; if corn be dear, cattel will be cheap, that weather oft times, that hinders one kind of grain, helps another: but here God blasts all the helps of the nature. Therefore God compares his judgments to a fire that burns all before it. The Land is as the Garden of *Eden*, before it and behind it a desolate wilderness, and this the Lord points at as a wonder, *Joel* 1. 2. *Hear this ye old men* (who can talk of dear years) *hath this been in your dayes, or even in the dayes of your Fathers? shut which the Palmer-worm hath left, hath the catter pillar eaten.* When God begins in a way of judgment, he makes an end, he makes the decayes of nature

Joel 2. 3.

ture excessive and violent; and yet *Habakkuk* will rejoyce in the Lord, and joy in the God of his salvation. In his resolution you have the first particle *(although)* *Verse* 17. Now this particle is an act of forecast, these miseries may befal us; And in the 18. *Verse* you have the particle *(yet)* & that's an act of preparation against these miseries. That particle *(although)* forecasts the misery and that particle *(yet)* forelayes the remedy; he foresees sorrows in the first, and he provides against them in the second, *yet I will rejoyce in the Lord, and joyin the God of my salvation.*

So *Paul* comes with a *Benedictus* in his mouth (and surely it was in his heart before it was in his mouth) 2 Cor. 1. 3. *Blessed be God, even the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.* Verse 4. *Who comforteth us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we our selves are comforted of God.* Verse 5. *For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation aboundeth by Christ.* The Apostle begins here with thanksgiving, according to his accustomed manner in all his Epistles; but contrary to his custom doth he apply this thanksgiving wholly to himself. The reason was (saith *Beza*) because the Corinthians did begin to despise him for his afflictions. (It being the common course of the world to despise the People of God when they are under sufferings) Therefore he answered confidently for himself, that though he had been much afflicted, yet he had been much comforted, and rejoyced the more in his comforts, because God had comforted him for that very cause, that he might be able and willing to comfort others. God is the God of all sorts and degrees of comfort, who hath all comforts at his dispose. This phrase, *The God of all comforts*, intimates to us, 1. That no comfort can be found any where else, he hath the sole gift of comfort. 2. Not only some, but all comfort; no imaginable comfort is wanting in him, nor to be found out of him: Look as the air lights not without the Sun, and as fuel heats not without fire, so neither can any thing soundly comfort us without God. 3. All de-

εὐλόγητος, that is word for word *Let God be well spoken of.* God blesseth us really, signally, greatly; and we bless him verbally, mentally, practically.

degreet of comfort are to be found in him in our greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers. The lower the ebbe, the higher the tide; the deeper the distress, the greater the comforts; though the Apostle was greatly afflicted, yet his comforts did exceed his afflictions. 2 Cor. 7. 6. *Nevertheless God that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus.* When the Corinthians were in a very low condition, when they were even spent with grief, and swallowed up in sorrows, when they were destitute of all relief and comfort, then the God of all comforts did comfort them. No tribulations, no persecutions, no grievances, no prison doores, no boults, no bars can keep out the consolations of God, from flowing in upon his People. God loves to comfort his People, when all their outward comforts fail them. Gods comforts are not only sweet, but seasonable; he never comes too soon, nor never stays too long. If one drop of the joy of the Holy Ghost should fall into Hell, it would swallow up all the torments of Hell, saith *Austin.* The joy of the Holy Ghost will certainly swallow up all the troubles and sufferings that we meet with in a way of righteousnes. None have been more Divinely cheerful and merry than the Saints have been under their greatest sufferings. *John Noyes* took up a faggot at the fire, and kissed it, saying, Blessed be the time, that ever I was born to come to this preferment. When they fastned *Alice Driver* to the stake to be burnt, never did neck-kerchief (said she with a cheerful countenance) become me so well as this chain. Mr. *Bradford* put off his cap and thanked God, when the Keepers wife brought him word that he was to be burnt on the morrow. Mr. *Taylor* fetcht a frisk, when he was come near the place where he was to suffer. *Henry* and *John* (two Augustin Monks) being the first that were burnt in *Germany*; and Mr. *Rogers* the first that was burnt in Queen *Mary*'s dayes, did all sing in the flames. Thus you see, that it is not the greatest troubles, nor the deepest distresses, nor the most deadly dangers that can hinder the

This is a most sweet attribute of God a breast that we should be still sucking at.

1 Pet. 4. 12, 13, 14.

the joy of the Lord, from overflowing the soul. But,

Eleventhly [*If God be with us who can be against us?*] I answer, none, so as to deprive us of our graces, which next to Christ are our choicest jewels. 1 John 3. 9. *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin.* That is, doth not give himself over to a voluntary serving of sin; he do's not make a trade of sin; he sins not totally, finally, malitiously, habitually, studiously, resolutely, wilfully, delightfully, deadly, ἁμαρτίαν οὐ ποιεῖ, *He does not make it his work to sin*, he cannot follow his lusts, as a work-man follows his trade) *For his seed remaineth in him*, The seed of God, the seed of grace, is an abiding seed; grace in it self is certain and unchangeable, though the feeling thereof be uncertain; grace hath an abiding excellency in it; grace hath eternity stamped upon it; it is durable riches; other riches make themselves wings, and flye from us, but grace will keep us company till we get to Heaven, our last step in holyness will be into happiness; grace is a blossom of eternity; it is an anointing that abides, that is the principle of grace infused into you, which was typified by the unctions, or anointings in the ceremonial Law, which was signified by the precious ointment, poured upon the head of *Aaron*, that ran down to the skirts of his garments; this principle will prove durable and lasting. Grace is a well of water, springing up into everlasting life; grace is a river of living water: Now this river can never be dryed up, because the Spirit of God is the constant spring that feeds it, and maintains it; grace is not a stream or a pond that may run dry, but a well, yea a springing well of inexhaustible fulness, sweetness, vertue, and refreshment; grace will still be springing up, and flowing out in all the carriages and deportments of a Christian; grace will be flowing out in all a Christians duties and services in his outward calling and employments, in his tryals and sufferings; grace will break out at a Christians eyes, ears, tongue, hands, feet; where grace is a well of water, a river of living water, there that Christian will see for Christ, and hear for

Prov. 8. 18. cap. 27. 24.

1 John 2. 27. John 4. 14. cap. 7. 38.

for Christ, and talk for Christ, and do for Christ, and walk with Christ; grace is a well, a river, that will be springing up to everlasting life; grace and glory differ (*non specie, sed gradu*) in degree, not in kind; grace differs very little from glory, the one is the seed, the other the flower; grace is glory militant, and glory is grace triumphant; grace is a beginning of glory, it may be compared to the golden chain in *Homer*, whose top was fastned to the chair of *Jupiter*; grace and glory are individual, and inseparable; the Psalmist joyns them together, *The Lord will give grace and glory.* Grace is a living spring that never faileth, a seed that never dyeth, a jewel which never consumeth, a Sun that never setteth; all other gifts of whatsoever kind, worth or excellency, are but like a cloud soon dispelled, a vessel of clay soon broken, a sandy foundation soon sunk; grace is more excellent than gold: gold draws the heart from God, grace draws the heart to God; gold doth but enrich the mortal part, the ignoble part, but grace enriches the Angelical part, the noble part; gold perishes, but grace perseveres; if grace were not permanent, it could not be excellent; if grace were not durable, it could not be pleasurable; if grace were not lasting, yea everlasting, it could not be a Christians comfort in life; his support in death and his glorious crown in the great day of account; grace in it self is permanent, incorruptible; it fadeth not away; it is a birth that shall never dye; it is a plant of renown that shall never wither, but grow up more and more till grace be turn'd into glory: upon which account one of the Ancients had rather have S. *Paul's* coat with his heavenly graces, then the purple of Kings with their Kingdoms: No troubles, no distresses, no dangers, can deprive us of our graces, can rob us of our spiritual treasure. But,

Psalm 84.11.

1 Pet. 1.7.

Hierom.

Twelfthly, [*If God be with us who can be against us?*] I answer none, so as to deprive us of our inward peace, rest, and quiet, though it thunder and lighten, and rain and blow abroad, yet a man may be at peace, and

and reſt and quiet at home. A man may have much trouble in the world, and yet reſt and quiet in his own ſpirit. John 14. 27. *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the World giveth, give I unto you; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.* No men nor Devils, no troubles, nor diſtreſſes, can deprive a Chriſtian of that inward and bleſſed peace that Chriſt hath purchaſed and paid ſo dear for. Peace with God and peace of conſcience are rare jewels, that none can ſtrip us of. The world may wiſh you peace, but it is only Chriſt can give you peace. The worlds peace is commonly a dear bought peace, but Chriſt's peace is a cheap peace, a free peace. [*My peace I give unto you.*] The worlds peace is commonly a ſinful peace, but Chriſt's peace is a holy peace; the worlds peace is a curſed peace, but Chriſt's peace is a bleſſed peace; the worlds peace is but an earthly peace, but Chriſt's peace is an heavenly peace, *Rom.* 14. 17. Some Chriſtians thought that others could not come to Heaven if they did not eat ſuch meates at they, but *Paul* tells them, that the kingdom of God conſiſts not in meat or drink, but in righteouſneſs & peace, & joy of the Holy Ghoſt. The worlds peace is but an imaginary peace, but Chriſt's peace is a real peace. The worlds peace is but a ſuperficial peace, but Chriſt's peace is a ſolid and ſubſtantial peace. The worlds peace is but a tranſient peace, but Chriſts peace is a permanent peace. The worlds peace is but a temporary peace, but Chriſt's peace is an eternal peace; it is a peace that all the world can't give to a Chriſtian, and it is a peace that all the world can't take from a Chriſtian. When the tyrant threatned one of the Ancients, that he would take away his houſe; he anſwered, Yet thou canſt not take away my peace. I will break up thy ſchool, yet ſhall I keep whole my peace; I will confiſcate all thy goods, yet there is no premunire againſt my peace; I will baniſh thee thy Country, yet I ſhall carry my peace with me. All above a believer is at peace, the controverſie betwixt God and him is ended, Chriſt takes up the quarrel betwixt God

As bonum Hæreditarium.

Rom. 5. 1. 2 Cor. 1. 12.

Heb. 12. 14. Pſalm 29. 11.

1 Theſ. 5. 3. 1 Pet. 3. 11. Jam. 3. 21. Iſa. 9. 6, 7. Pſ. 37. Iſa. 26. 3. c. 27. 5.

and a believer; (*We have peace with God*) All within a
Rom. 5. 1. believer is at peace, a peaceable God makes all at peace;
when our peace is made in the Court of Heaven (which
is upon the first act of believing) then follows peace in
the Court of Conscience. *Peace, which passeth all under-*
Philip. 4. 7. *standing*; and all below a believer is at peace with him,
he has Peace with all the Creatures; when we are friends
with God, then all the Creatures are our friends. *The*
Job 5. 23. *stones of the field shall be at league with thee, the beasts*
of the field shall be at peace with thee, &c. The peace
that Christ gives, is the inheritance of Saints only, 'twas
all the Legacy which the Prince of peace left to his sub-
jects, and this Legacy none can take from them. Perse-
cutors may take away my goods, but they cannot take
away my peace; they may take away my estate, but they
cannot take away my peace; they may take away my li-
berty, but they cannot take away my peace; they may
take away my good name, but they cannot take away
my peace; they may take away my relations, but they
cannot take away my peace; they may take away my life,
but they cannot take away my peace. I grant that the
best have no perfection of peace, because they have no
perfection of grace. If there were a perfection of grace,
then there might be a perfection of peace, but the perfe-
ction of both is reserved for another world; and it must
be granted that though sometimes a believer may want
the sense of peace, the sweet of peace, yet the grounds of
his peace are still fixt, certain and constant; they are like
mount *Sion*, that cannot be remov'd. Now the grounds of
a Christians peace are these, *viz.* Interest in Christ, recon-
ciliation with God, justification, remission of sin, adoption,
the Covenant of grace & peace, *&c.* Now these are always
sure and everlasting, though the sense of peace may eb &
flow, rise and fall in a believers breast, especially when
he is a combating with strong corruptions, or high tem-
ptations, or under sad desertions, or when unbelief has
got the throne, or when their hearts are quarrelsom, for
commonly a quarrelsom heart is a troublesom heart; or
when

when they have blotted their evidences for Heaven, or when they are fallen from their firſt love, or when they have contracted eminent guilt upon their ſouls, or when they are declined in their communion with God, *&c.* Now in theſe caſes though a believer may loſe the ſenſe of peace, yet the grounds of his peace remain firm and ſure, and though he may loſe the ſenſe of his peace, yet in all theſe ſad and dark conditions his ſoul is day and night in the purſuit of peace, and he will never leave the chaſe till he has recovered his peace, knowing that God will firſt or laſt ſpeak peace to his ſoul; yea, though he has loſt the ſenſe of peace, yet he has that abiding ſeed of grace in his ſoul, that will in time recover his peace; do your enemies threaten to take away this or that from you, you may throw up your caps at them, and bid them do their worſt, for they can never take that peace from you that Chriſt has given as a Legacy to you; when there are never ſo great ſtorms within or without, yet then a believer may find peace in the Prince of peace; when his imperfections are many, a perfect Saviour can keep him in perfect peace in the midſt of them all, though his ſacrifices are imperfect, yet Chriſt a perfect Prieſt can ſpeak peace to his ſoul. Peace is that never-fading garland, which Chriſt will ſo ſet and ſettle upon the heads of the upright, that none ſhall be able to take it off. A Chriſtian can never loſe his inward peace, either totally or finally; 'tis true by Sin, Satan, and the World, a Chriſtians peace may be ſomewhat interrupted, but it can never be finally loſt. The greateſt ſtorms in this World that beat upon a believer, will in time blow over, and the Sun of righteouſneſs, the Prince of peace, will ſhine as gloriouſly upon him as ever. Under this word *Shalom* the Jews comprehend all peace, proſperity, and happy ſucceſs; when the worſt of men have done their worſt againſt the People of God, yet the iſſue ſhall be peace, proſperity, and happy ſucceſs. [*My peace I give unto you,*] That is that peace with God, and peace with conſcience, that I have purchaſed with my blood, I give unto you. And

Pſalm 85. 8.
1 John 3. 9.

Iſa. 9. 6.

Iſa. 26. 3, 4.
Heb. 7.

שלום.

what power or policy is there, that can deprive us of this Legacy? surely none. The peace that Christ gives is bottomed upon his blood, upon his righteousness, upon his satisfaction, upon his intercession, and upon a Covenant of peace, and therefore it must needs be a lasting peace, an abiding peace. But,

Thirteenthly, [*If God be with us, who can be against us?*] I answer none, so as to hinder us from being hid, secured, guarded, and protected by God in an evil day, or in a day of greatest trouble, distress, or danger. *Jer.* 39. 11. *Now Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon, gave charge concerning Jeremiah, to Nebuzazadan the Captain of the Guard, saying:* Verse 12. *Take him, and look well to him,* [Heb. *Set thine eyes upon him*] *and do him no harm, but do unto him, even as he shall say unto thee.* Here you shall see the admirable power, wisdom, and goodness of God, inclining the heart of this great Monarch & Conquerour to provide for the Prophets safety and security, he that was a dreadful scourge to punish the wicked, is made by God the deliverer and preserver of the Prophet. In the 12 Verse you have the Kings Royal Commission to the Captain of his Guard, to be as kind to him as tender of him, and to carry it as courteously to him, even as the Prophet himself should desire: *Look well to him, do him no harm, but do unto him even as he shall say unto thee.* Let him have all the content, all the satisfaction, and all the accommodation that himself shall require. *Jer.* 15. 11. *The Lord said, Verily I will cause the enemy to intreat thee well in the time of evil, and in the time of affliction.* Heb. *If I do not cause,* &c. A defective speech in the nature of an oath, as if God had said, Let me not be deemed a God of my word, let me not be accounted true, let none reckon me faithful in my promise, if I don't turn his sufferings into his advantage, and save him from danger in the midst of danger: If in the time of the enemies invasion I be not a wall of fire about him, if in the time of publicke calamity I don't secure him; never trust me for a God more: If he don't find more favour at the hand of his

Zach. 2. 5.

his enemies than he hath formerly found among his own People, never own me for a God more. Verſe 20. *I am with thee to ſave thee, and to deliver thee, ſaith the Lord.* Verſe 21. *And I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible.* God engages himſelf to protect him againſt all the might & malice of his moſt terrible enemies, and though he ſhould fall into their hands, yet he would deliver him out of their hands. *Pſalm* 33. 3. *They have conſulted againſt thy hidden ones.* The Saints are, 1. Hid in Gods decree, 2. Hid in Chriſts wounds, 3. Hid in the chambers of Divine providence, 4. Hid in common dangers, as *Noah* was hid in his Ark, and as *Lot* was hid in *Zoar*, and as *Daniel* was hid in the Lyons den, and as the three Children were hid in the fiery Furnace, and as *Jonah* was hid in the Whales belly, 5. Hid with Chriſt in God, in times of greateſt trouble the Saints are hid under the hollow of Gods hand, under the ſhadow of Gods wing. *Pſalm* 27. 5. *For in the time of trouble he ſhall hide me in his Pavilion.* The Hebrew *Succoh* is written with a little Samech, to ſhew, ſay ſome, that a little pavilion or cottage where God is, ſhall be ſufficient to ſave-guard the Saints in the day of adverſity. He ſhall hide me in his hut, as a Shepherd doth his ſheep in a ſtormy day. [*In the ſecret of his Tabernacle ſhall he hide me.*] I ſhall be as ſafe, as if I were ſhut up in his holy Ark, Tabernacle, or Temple, whither they uſe to flee for ſhelter to the horns of the Altar, yea as if a man were hid in the moſt holy Place, where none might enter but only the High-Prieſt once a year, which is therefore called *Gods ſecret place.* A Shepherd ſhould not be more careful to ſhelter his ſheep in a Tent or Tabernacle from the heat of the Sun, nor a King ſhould not be more ready to protect a Favorite in his pavilion, whence none durſt venture to take him, than God would be careful and ready to ſhroud and ſhelter his People from the rage, madneſs, and malice of their enemies. How did God hide his Church in *Ægypt!* the Buſh was ſtill burning, and yet was not conſumed.

Vide Jer. 40. 1, 2 3, 4, 5. and c. 26. 23, 24. Jer. 45. 4.

Iſa. 26. 20.

Coloſ. 3. 3.

Pſal. 91. 1, 4.

Ezech. 7. 22.

Exod. 3. 2, 3.

1 Kings 19. 18. sumed; and how did he hide seven thousand in *Eliah's* time, that had not bowed their knees to *Baal*. Though Rev. 12. 6. *the Woman* (the Church) *be driven to flee into the wilderness, yet there she is hid, and there she had a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and three-score dayes.* Let our Enemies do their worst, they shall not hinder us of Divine protection; no power, nor policy can hinder our being preserved and secured by God, in the greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers that can attend us. But

Fourteenthly, (*If God be with us, who can be against us?*) I answer, None, so as to deprive us of our union Joh. 15. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. with Christ, as to dissolve that blessed union that is between Christ and our souls. When Men and Divels have done their worst, our Mariage union with Christ holds good, this union is indissoluble; this union between Christ & Believers is not capable of any separation, they are so one, that all the violence of the world, nor all the power of darkness, can never be able to make them two again. Hence the Apostle's triumphant challenge, Rom. 8. 35. *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?* If the question did not imply a strong Negation; the Apostle himself Verse 38, 39. doth give us a negation in words at length, *Neither death, nor life, nor Angels, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor heigth, nor depth, nor any other Creature, shall be able to separate us*, &c. Here you have a long Catalogue, consisting of a large induction of various particulars; But none of all these can dissolve the union between Christ and Believers. None can untie that knot, that is tied by the Spirit on Christs part, and by Faith on ours. Christ and Believers are so firmly joyned together, that all the powers on earth, and all the united strength of Hell, shall never be able to put them asunder or to separate them one from another, look as no distance of place can hinder this union, so no force or violence from Devils or Men, shall ever be able to dissolve this union, and herein lies the peculiar, transcen-

ſcendent bleſſedneſs of this union above all other unions, they all may ceaſe, be broken and come to nothing, every one of them is ſoluble: The head may be ſeparated from the members, and the members from the head; the Husband muſt be ſeparated from the Wife, and the Wife from the Husband; the Parents muſt be ſeparated from the Children, and the Children from the Parents, and boſom friends muſt be ſeparated one from another. The foundation and the houſe may be ſeparated, and the branches may be cut off from the vine, yea the ſoul and body may be diſunited by death, but the myſtical union ſtands faſt for ever: Chriſt and a gracious ſoul can never be ſeparated, God hath joyned them together, and no mortal ſhall ever be able to put them aſunder; there is not only a continuation of it all our life, but alſo in death it ſelf: Our very bodies ſleeping in the duſt, are (even then) in union with Chriſt. There are two abiding things in the Saints, their unction, and their union; their unction abides, *But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you*; and their union abides, for it follows, *and ye ſhall abide in him.* Chriſt earneſtly prayes, that we might be one, as he and his Father are one; not eſſentially, nor perſonally, but ſpiritually, ſo as no other Creature is united to Chriſt. There can be no Divorce between Chriſt and the believing Soul; Chriſt hates putting away: Sin may for a time ſeemingly ſeparate between Chriſt and the Believer, but it can never finally ſeparate between Chriſt and the Believer. Look as it is impoſſible for the leaven, that is in the dough, to be ſeparated from the dough, after it is once mixed, for it turneth the nature of the dough into it ſelf; ſo it is impoſſible for the Saints ever to be ſeparated from Chriſt: for Chriſt is in the Saints as nearly and as really, as the leaven is in the dough. Chriſt and Believers are ſo incorporated, as if Chriſt and they were one lump: Our nature is now joyned to God by the indiſſolvible tye of the Hypoſtatical union in the ſecond Perſon; and we in our perſons are joyned to

Matth. 19. 6.

1 John 2. 27.

John 17. 20, 21, 22, 23.

Malach. 2. 16.

Rom. 8. 10.
Coloſſ. 1. 27.
1 John 3. 21.
John 17. 23.

to God, by the mystical indissolvible bond of the Spirit, the third Person. Our union with the Lord Jesus, is so near, so close, and so glorious that it makes us one spirit with him. In this blessed union the Saints are

1 Cor. 6. 17.

not only joyned to the graces and benefits which flow from Christ; but to the Person of Christ, to Christ himself, all the powers on Earth, and all the powers in Hell, can never separate Christ from the Believer, nor the Believer from Christ, when all other unions are dissolved, this union holds good.

John 1. 16. Rom. 8. 32. 1 Cor. 3. 21, 22, 23.

I readily grant that the sense and apprehension of this union may (in this life) be much interrupted, and many times greatly darkned, but the substance of the union still remains: And I readily grant that a Believer may be much assaulted and tempted to doubt of his union with Christ, and to question his union with Christ, and yet nevertheless a Believers union with Christ, continues and abides for ever. And I readily grant that the influences of it for some time may be suspended, but yet the union it self is not, nay cannot be dissolved: As it was in the Hypostatical union, for a time there was a suspending of the comforting influences of the Divine nature in the humane, in so much that our Saviour cried out: *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Yet for all this the union between the two natures, was not in the least abolished; so here in the Mystical union, the sensible effects, comforts, and benefits of our union with Christ, may sometimes be kept in and not appear, but yet the union it self abides, and shall abide firm and inviolable for ever; 'tis an inseparable and insuperable union. Look as no power on earth is sufficient to overpower the Spirit of Christ, which on Christs part makes the union, so no power on earth shall be able to conquer Faith, which on our part also makes the union: Satan and the world may make attempts upon this union, but they will never be able to break this union, to dissolve this union; yea though death be the bane of all natural unions, yet death can never be the bane of this

Matth. 27. 46.

John 10. 27. -31. 1 John 4. 4. 1 Pet. 1. 5. Luke 22. 31, 32.

My-

Mystical union; though death puts a period to all other unions, yet death can never put a period to this union; when the Believer is in his grave his union with Christ holds good. But

Fifteenthly, (*If God be with us, who can be against us?*) I answer, None, so as to deprive us of our crowns, there is no power nor policy on Earth or in hell that can deprive a Christian.

First, Of his crown of righteousness, 2 *Tim.* 4. 8. *Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.* 'Tis a Metaphor (say several) from the custom in war, who used to crown the Conquerors with honour, &c. It is a similitude taken from fighters or Combatants, who for a prize received a Crown, when they had contended lawfully. The reward of Eternal life here, is called *a Crown of righteousness.* 1. Because 'tis purchased for us by the righteousness of Christ, by his perfect and compleat righteousness & obedience, dear Jesus hath merited this for us, and so in Christ it is due to us by way of merit, though in respect of us 'tis of meer grace, of rich grace, of soveraign grace, of infinite grace, of glorious grace. 2. Because he is righteous that hath promised this Crown: Though every promise that God makes, is of free and rich grace, yet when once they are made, the truth and justice of God obligeth him to keep touch with his People; for as he cannot deny himself, so he cannot do any thing unworthy of himself: Men say and unsay, they promise one thing and mean another; men many times eat their words as soon as they have spoke them; but thus God can never; thus God will never do; God can never repent of his promises, he can never waver, he can never go back from his word: God is not a man, that he should lie, neither the Son of man that he should repent: *Hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?* All the promises that refer to this life and

Estius, Scultetus, &c.

Rev. 2. 10. Rev. 3. 21. 1 John 2. 25. 2 Thess. 1. 5, 6, 7 10.

Num. 23. 19.

and a better, not sure, firm, faithful, unchangable, immutable. All the promises are the word of a God, and given upon the honour of a God, that they shall be made good. O my Friends, the all-sufficiency of God, the omniscience of God, the omnipotency of God, the loving kindness and faithfulness of God, yea, and the Oath of God may fully, yea abundantly satisfie us, and secure us, that God will certainly make good all his precious promises to us. We commonly say, when an honest man passeth his word for a little money: O it is as sure as if it were in our purse; but Gods word of promise is abundantly more sure, for as his Nature is Eternal, so his word of promise is unchangeable: the promises are a firm foundation to build our hopes and happiness upon; they are an Anchor both sure and stedfast. Memorable is that saying of *David*, Psalm 138. 2. *For thou hast magnified thy word above all thy Name*: Which words are to be understood (as *David Kimhi* saith) *Hysteron proteron*, that thou hast by thy word (that is by performing thy word and promises) magnified thy Name above all things. 3. Because it is a just and righteous thing with God, to crown them with glory at last, who have been crowned with shame, reproach and dishonour for his Name and interest in this world; so that Eternal life is a Crown of righteousness, *ex parte Dei*, God hath promised it to such as overcome; and *ex parte rei*, 'tis just with God to give unto his suffering Servants rest and peace. 4. Because it is given only to righteous men all that wear this crown come to it in a way of righteousness; a righteous Crown cannot be had but in the use of righteous means. The Chaldean, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman Princes commonly gained their Crowns by fraud, flattery, policy, blood, &c. so that their Crowns were bloody Crowns, and not righteous Crowns. 5. and lastly, The Apostle calls it a Crown of righteousness, which the righteous Judge shall give him; the more fitly to follow the Metaphor taken from Runners and Wrestlers, for prizes at their solemn exercises or games in *Greece*,

Promissa hæc tua justi Domine, (saith Austin) & quis falli timet cum promittit ipse veritas.

Hab. 2. 3. Jer. 32. 41. Psalm 89. 34.

in

in which there were certain Judges appointed to observe those that proved masters, and give just Sentence on the Conquerors side, if he strove lawfully, and fairly won the prize. Now this Crown is laid up, the Greek word ἀπόκειται, importes two things. 1. A designation of that which is laid up to some peculiar person. 2. A reservation and safe keeping of it, to the use of those it is designed to. Earthly Crowns have been often pulled off from Princes heads, but this Crown of righteousnes is so safely laid up, that none can reach it, none can touch it, none can pull it from a Believers head. *Xerxes* crowned his steers-man in the morning, and beheaded him in the evening of the same day. And *Andronicus* the Greek Emperour crowned his Admiral in the morning, & then took off his head in the after-noon. *Roffensis* had a Cardinals hat sent him, but his head was cut off before it came to him. *Doth the Crown* (saith *Solomon*) *endure to every generation?* It is a question which implieth a strong negation. O, no, there is nothing more uncertain than Earthly Crowns. *Henry* the Sixth was honoured with the Crowns of two Kingdoms, *France* and *England*: The first was lost by the faction of his Nobles; the other was twice pulled from his head. Princes Crowns are withering things. Earthly Crowns may be soon put on, and as soon be pulled off: Most Princes Crowns do but hang on one side of their heads. All the Powers on Earth, and all the Devils in Hell, can never reach this Crown of righteousnes, though wicked men have long reaches, yet they can never reach a Believers Crown, which is his joy and comfort in the midst of all his sorrows and sufferings. Thus *Basil* speaketh of some Martyrs, that were cast out all night naked in a bitter cold frosty season, and were to be burned the next day, how they comforted themselves in this manner, The winter is sharp but Paradise is sweet, here we shiver for cold, but the bosom of *Abraham* will make amends for all. The Philosopher could say to the Tyrants face: You may kill me, but

Prov. 27. 24.

Basil. ad 40. Martyr, &c.

but you cannot hurt me; you may take away my head, but you cannot take away my Crown. O Christians, let this be your joy and triumph, that the Crown of righteousness is laid up safe for you; no Tyrants arm is long enough to reach that Crown. But

Secondly, There is no power nor policy on Earth or in Hell, that can deprive a Christian of his Crown of life; *James* 1. 12. *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the Crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.* (*The Crown of life*) that is Eternal life whereby after the fight and conquest he shall be glorified as with a Crown; as there was a Crown to him that overcame in their exercises among the Grecians. Blessedness is the general reward, the Crown of life is the particular reward: In these words as *Chrysostom* observes there is a great Emphasis, they are both Emphatical; for life is the best of all natural things, and a Crown is the best of all civil things: Here is the best and the best, words are too weak to express what a rare blessing a Crown of life is. The Crown of life is in the other World, saith *Gregory*, this life is the life of conflict, that of Crowns and wreaths; but you will say, what doth this Crown of life signifie. I answer,

Piscat.

First, The Crown of life signifies, solid and substantial, honour and glory; as a Crown is a solid and substantial thing: Heaven admits of no honour and glory, but what is solid and substantial; the Crown of life is a massie Crown, a ponderous Crown, to shew that the glory above is a massie glory, substantial glory. That you may see it is massie and substantial, observe what a word the Apostle useth: *The weight of glory, the exceeding eternal weight of glory*: Such a weight as infinitely overpoyseth all afflictions. The Apostle alludeth to the Hebrew and Chaldee words, which signifie both weight and glory. The Arabick version renders it, *Working for us a weight of glory in the most eminent and largest degree and measure.* The Syriack reads it, *Infinitam gloriam*

2 Cor. 4. 17.

כָּבוֹד, יְקָר,

Modo eminentissimo & largissimo.

riam, An infinite glory. *Haymo* reads it, *Magnitudinem gloriæ supra omnem modum & mensuram, A greatness of glory, beyond all bounds and measure.* *Beza* reads it, *Excellenter excellens, Exceedingly excellent.* Yet none of these reach the height of the Apostle's Rhetorick, neither is any translation able to express it. Glory is so great a weight, that if the Saints were not upheld by the infinite power and strength of God, it were impossible they should be able to bear it. To gold and precious things the weight addeth to the value; as the more massie and weighty a Crown is, the more it is worth: The glory of Heaven is not only Eternal glory, but it is a weight of glory; yea such a weight as exceeds all expressions, all comparisons: The honour and glory of this world is but like the cracking of thorns under a pot; it is but like a blaze, a shadow, a dream, a vapour; it is but like a fading flower, or the picture of a Prince drawn upon the Ice, with his purple Robes, and his glorious Crown, &c. which melts away as soon as the Sun riseth; the consideration of which, made one Prince say of his Crown: O Crown! more noble than happy! A crown is the the choicest and chiefest of all humane rewards: Amongst all terrene gifts none more honourable and glorious than a Crown; this is the heigth of humane excellencies; and for the attainment of which many have made most sad, desperate and dangerous adventures; but alas! what are all earthly Crowns for honour & dignity, to the Crown of life? No more than shadows to substances, pebbles to pearls, or dross to gold. But

Secondly, The Crown of life signifies the greatest honour and glory; there is nothing higher in the estimation, and in the admiration of men than a Crown, it is the highest appendent of Majesty: A Crown is the Emblem of Majesty, and so it notes that Imperial and Kingly dignity; to which Believers are advanced by Christ. There is nothing that Men esteem of above a Crown, or admire than a Crown, or are ambitious off than a Crown. The Crown is the top of Royalty; all earthly

Psalm 8. 7.

Ephes. 1. 3.

earthly Crowns have crosses hanging upon them; all earthly Crowns are stuffed with thorns; which made a great Prince say, You look upon my Crown and my purple Robes, but did you but know how they are lined with thorns, you would not stoop to take them up. Queen *Elizabeth* is said to swim to her Crown through a Sea of sorrow: And so many of the Princes of this world have swum to their Crowns through a Sea of sin, a Sea of trouble, a Sea of sorrow, and a Sea of blood. The Crown of life is an honourable Crown, and that is the reason why the Heavenly glory is expresst by a Crown; the Saints are heirs not only of Christs cross, but also of his Crown, that is of his honour and glory: The honour and glory of all earthly Crowns are greatly darkned and obscured by the cares and troubles, the temptations & dangers that are inseparably annexed to them; but no cares, no troubles attend the Crown of life, the Crown of glory; Eternal life is a coronation day. But

Xerxes.

Rev. 3. 21.

Thirdly, The Crown of life signifies the reward of victory, a Crown is the honour of those that strive; Crowns were alwayes the rewards of Conquerours. *Revel.* 2. 10. *Be thou faithful to the death, and I will give thee a Crown of life.* A Crown without cares, corrivals, envy, end; a Crown not of gold, silver, pearls, laurels, or such like fading, perishing, corruptible things, but a Crown of life, an everliving Crown, an everlasting Crown, a neverfading Crown. 'Tis an allusion to a custom that was amongst the Grecians, for such as got the mastery in their games of wrastling, or running, or the like, were crowned with a Garland in token of victory; 'tis not he that fights, but he that conquers, that carries the Crown: The Crown of life is for that man, and that man is for the Crown of life, who holds on conquering and to conquer, as Christ his head has done before him. The Heathens in their Olympicks had their Cups, and Garments and Crowns that were the rewards of the Conquerour, yea if a horse did but run a race and won, he had a Cup or a Crown; and thereupon *Theocritus*

Gregory.

Dr. *Raynolds* against *Hart* p. 482

saith

saith, See what poor things the world glories in, the brute beasts are taken with, their conquerours are crowned; and so are their horses: But what were all their cups, garments, and crowns of ivy and laurel? &c. to this crown of life, that is promised to the overcoming Christian; you must first be conquering Christians, before you shall be crowned Christians. Why do you require that in one place (saith one of the Ancients) which is due in another? why would you preposterously have the crown before you overcome? whilst we are in our warring state fighting against the world, the flesh, and the Devil, a crown does not become us. I have read, how that upon a triumph all the Emperour *Severus* his Souldiers, for the greater pompe, were to put on crowns of bays, but there was one Christian among them that wore it on his arm, and being asked the reason of it, he boldly answered (*Non decet Christianum in hac vita coronari*) *It becomes not a Christian to wear his Crown in this life.* That crown that is made out of the Tree of life, is a wreath of laurel that never withers, a crown that never fades, a crown that will sit fast on no head but the conquerours. But,

Ambros.

Fourthly, the Crown of life signifies a lasting Crown, a living Crown, to say the Crown of life is to say a living Crown, and living Crowns are only to be found in Heaven. The word Crown notes the perpetuity of glory. A Crown is round, and hath neither beginning nor ending, and therefore the glory of the Saints in Heaven is called an immortal, an immarcessible, incorruptible, and never fading Crown. The Crown of life signifies the lasting honour and glory of the Saints in Heaven. I have read of an Emperour that had three crowns, one on his sword, another on his head, and then cries out, *Tertiam in Cœlis, The third is in Heaven, and my hope* (saith he) *shall be in the everlasting Crown.* The life to come is only the true life, the happy life, the safe life, the honourable life, the lasting, yea the everlasting life, and therefore the Crown is reserved for that life. King

Prov. 27. 24. Ezr. 21. 25, 26, 27.

2 Pet. 1. 4. 1 Cor. 9. 24.

See my String of Pearls.

Wil-

William the Conquerour was crowned three times every year, all his reign, at three several places, *viz. Glocester*, *Winchester*, and *Westminster*, but death hath long since put a period to his Crown. The Crowns of the greatest Monarchs in the world (though they last long) yet are corruptible, subject to wearing, cracking, stealing, they will be taken from them, or they from their crowns suddenly. Witness that pile of crowns (as the Historian speaks) that was piled up (as it were) at *Alexander*'s gates, when he sate down and wept, because there were no more worlds to conquer. All Scripture and Histories do abundantly tell us, that there is nothing more fading than Princes crowns. But,

Hackwel.

Fifthly, the Crown of life notes a well entitled crown, a crown that comes by a true and noble Title. A Christian has the best Title imaginable to the Crown of life. 1. He has a Title by Christs blood, 2. By the new Birth. 3. By free and precious promises. 4. By donation. 5. By marriage union, and communion with Christ, who is heir apparent to all the glory of Heaven. 6. By a sure & everlasting Covenant. King *Henry* the VII. of *England*, pretended a sixfold title to the crown, 1. By conquest, 2. By the election of the Souldiers in the field, 3. By Parliament, 4. By birth, 5. By donation, 6. By marriage; but what was his pretended Title to that real and full Title, that a believer has to the Crown of life? But,

Eph. 1. 7. 1 Pet. 1. 3, 4. 2 Pet. 1. 4. Luk. 12. 32. 2 Cor. 11. 2. Heb. 1. 2. 2 Sam. 23. 5. Jer. 32. 40. 41.

Sixthly and lastly, The Crown of life notes the perfection of the glory of the Saints in Heaven; as the crown compasseth the head on every side, so in Heaven there is an aggregation of all internal and eternal good. One of the Ancients, speaking concerning what we can say of the glory of Heaven, saith, It is but a little drop of the Sea, and a little spark of the great Furnace, for those good things of eternal life are so many that they exceed number, so great that they exceed measure, so precious that they are above all estimation. *Nec Christus, nec Cælum patitur hyperbolem*, Neither Christ, nor Heaven can be by-

August. de Triplic. Habitu, c. 4.

hyperbolized: Nescio quid erit, quod ista vita non erit. And (saith one of the Fathers) what will that life be, or rather, what will not that life be, since all good either is not at all, or is in such a life? light which place cannot comprehend, voices and musick which time cannot ravish away, odours which are never dissipated, a feast which is never consumed, a blessing which eternity bestoweth, but eternity shall never see at an end. Do you ask me what Heaven is, saith one, when I meet you there I will tell you. The world to come (say the Rabbins) is the world where all is well. I have read of one that would willingly swim through a Sea of brimstone to get to Heaven, for there, and only there is perfection of happiness. What are the silks of *Persia*, the spices of *Ægypt*, the gold of *Ophir*, and the treasures of both *Indies* to the glory of another world? *Augustin* tells us, that one day when he was about to write some thing upon the eighth Verse of the thirty sixth Psalm, *Thou shalt make them drink of the Rivers of thy pleasures*; and being almost swallowed up with the contemplation of heavenly joyes, one call'd unto him very loud by his name; and enquiring who it was, he answered, I am *Hierom*, with whom in my life time thou hadst so much conference concerning doubts in Scripture, and am now best experienced to resolve thee of any doubts concerning the joyes of Heaven, but only let me first ask thee this question: Art thou able to put the whole Earth, and all the waters of the Sea, into a little pot? Canst thou measure the waters in thy fist? and mete out Heaven with thy span? or weigh the mountains in scales? and the hills in a ballance? If not, no more is it possible that thy understanding should comprehend the least of the joyes of Heaven; and certainly the least of the joyes of Heaven are unconceivable and inexpressible. But,

Thirdly, there is no power nor policy on Earth or in Hell, that can deprive a Believer of an incorruptible Crown, 1 Cor. 9. 25. *And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things, now, they do it to obtain* Psalm 21. 3.

a corruptible Crown, but we an incorruptible. He alludes to the Olympick exercises; now, running and wrestling were two of the Olympick games; now, in these Olympick games the reward was only a corruptible crown, a crown made up of Laurels, or Olive-branches, or Oaken-leaves, or of Flowers and Herbs, or at the highest of Silver and Gold, which soon faded; but we run for an incorruptible Crown of glory. A man (saith *Chrysostom*) would dwell in this contemplation of Heaven, and be loth to come out of it. Nay (saith *Augustin*) a man might age himself in it, and sooner grow old than weary. 1 Pet. 1. 4. *To an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you.* Here are super-excellent properties of the Heavenly inheritance.

1 An incorruptible inheritance. Gen. 3. 18. Isa. 23. 9.

First, it is κλῆρονομία ἄφθαρτος, an *incorruptible inheritance.* All earthly inheritances are liable to corruption, they are true gardens of *Adonis*, where we can gather nothing but trivial flowers, surrounded with many bryars thornes and thistles. O the hands, the hearts, the thoughts, the lives that have been corrupted by earthly inheritances! O the impure love, the carnal confidence, the vain boastings, the sensual joyes that have been the products of earthly inheritances. If a mans estate lyes in money, that may rust, or the thieves may break through and steal it; If in cattle, they may dye, or fall into the hands of the *Sabeans* and *Chaldeans*; If in houses, they may be burnt, witness the late dreadful fire that turn'd *London* into a ruinous heap; If in Lands, a forreign enemy may invade them, and conquer them. All earthly inheritances are no better than the Cities which *Solomon* gave to *Hiram*, which he called *Cabul*, that is to say, Displeasing or Dirty. Earthly inheritances they do but durt, daub, and dust the children of men; it is only the Heavenly inheritance that is incorruptible.

James 5. 2, 3, 4, 5. Mat. 6. 19, 20. Job 1. 14, 15, 17. See my Londons Lamentation.

1 King. 9. 13.

2 An inheritance undefiled.

Secondly, it is κλῆρονομία ἀμίαντος, an *inheritance undefiled.* There are few earthly inheritances, but some defilement, or other sticks close to them, many times they

they are got by fraud, oppression, violence, injustice, &c. and as they are often wickedly got, so they are as often wickedly kept; They that will but go to *Westminster-hall* may every term understand enough of these things. The Heavenly inheritance is the only undefiled inheritance; there is no sin, no sinner, no Devil to defile or pollute the heavenly inheritance, the incorruptible crown. The Greek word (*Amiantos*) signifies a precious stone, which though it be never so much soiled, yet it cannot be blemished nor defiled, yea the oftner you cast it into the fire and take it out, the more clear, bright, and shining it is; The Apostle may probably allude to this stone, and it is as if he should say, The incorruptible Crown, that you shall receive, shall be studded with the stone *Amiantos*, which cannot be defiled; no unclean thing shall enter into Heaven to defile this Crown, this inheritance. The Serpent got into the Earthly Paradise, and defiled *Adam*'s crown, yea he robbed him of his crown, but the subtil Serpent can never enter into the heavenly Paradise. But, Revel. 21. 27.

Thirdly, it is κληρονομια ἀμάραντος, an *inheritance that fadeth not away*. A Metaphor taken from flowers, the beauty of flowers, and the sweetness of flowers withers in a moment, and is quickly gone, and then they are good for nothing, but to be cast upon the dunghil: So it is with all Earthly inheritances, they soon lose their glory and fragrancy. Where is the glory of the *Chaldean*, *Persian*, *Grecian* and *Roman* Kingdoms? *Sic transit gloria Mundi*, hath been long since written upon them all; yea all the glory of the world is like the flower of the field, that soon fadeth away; How many great Men, and great Kingdoms have for a time shined in great glory, even like so many Suns in the Firmament, but are now vanished away, like so many blazing Comets! How hath the Moon of great Mens honours been eclipsed at the full and the Sun of their pomp gone down at noon! How soon is the Courtiers glory eclipsed, if his Prince do but frown upon him, and how soon does the Prince 3 An inheritance that fadeth not away. Dan. 7. 3. to the 8. Isa. 40. 6. 1 Pet. 1. 24.

become a peasant, if God does but frown upon him? The Greek word (*Amarantoi*) say some, is the proper name of a flower, which is still fresh and green, after it hath hung up in the house a long time. It is, as if the Apostle had said, Your incorruptible Crown shall be garnished or adorned with the precious flower (*Amarantoi*) which is always fresh, and green, and flourishing; And indeed this is the excellency of the Heavenly inheritance, that it fadeth not away, that it is a flower that never withereth; all the glory of that upper-world is like God himself lasting, yea everlasting. This never fading Crown is like the flower we call *Semper vivens*, it keeps always fresh and splendent; the glory of Believers shall never fade, nor wither it shall never grow old nor rusty. Thrice happy are those souls, that have a share in this incorruptible Crown. When *Alexander* heard the Philosophers discourse of another World, in which he had no part, he wept, to speak with the Apostle, as *one without hope*. None on earth have such cause to weep, as those that have no interest in that inheritance that fadeth not away. But,

1 Thes. 4. 13.

Fourthly and lastly, there is no power nor policy on Earth or in Hell, that can deprive a sincere Christian of a Crown of glory. 1 Pet. 5. 4. *And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a Crown of glory, which fadeth not away*; as the garlands did, wherewith the conquerours at games, races, & combates were crown'd, which were made of herbs, leaves, and flowers. A Crown imports perpetuity, plenty, dignity; It is the height of humane ambition. The Greek word *Amarantinon*, cometh from *Amarantus*, which is a flower that fadeth not, of which garlands were made in former times, and wherewith they crowned the Images of the Heathen Gods. A Believers Crown, his inheritance, his glory, his happiness, his blessedness shall be as fresh and flourishing after he hath been many millions of years in Heaven, as it was at his first entrance into it. Earthly Crowns are like tennis-balls, which are bandied up and down from one to another, and in time wear out. When

time

time shall be no more, when earthly Crowns and Kingdoms shall be no more, yea when the world shall be no more, a Christians Crown of glory shall be fresh, flourishing, and continuing; all the Devils in hell shall never wrangle a Believer out of his heavenly inheritance, nor deprive him of his crown of glory. The least thing in Heaven is better than the greatest things in this World; all things on Earth are fading, but the crown of glory never fadeth away: Thus you see why Heaven & the glory above is expressed by a crown; sometimes it is called a crown of righteousness, to note the grounds and rise of it; sometimes it is called a crown of life, because it is only to be enjoyed in everlasting life; sometimes it is called an incorruptible crown, to note the duration & continuance of it; and sometimes it is called a crown of glory, to note the honour, splendour, and eternity of it. Now let Devils, let oppressors, let persecutors do their worst they shall never be able to deprive the Saints of their blessed and glorious crowns. But,

Sixteenthly [*If God be with us, who can be against us?*] I answer, none, so as to make void our Covenant-relation, or our covenant-interest, as you may see by comparing the Scriptures in the margin together. The Covenant of grace is bottomed upon Gods free love, upon Gods everlasting love, upon Gods special and peculiar love, upon Gods unchangeable love, so that God can as soon cease to be, as he can cease to love those whom he has taken into covenant with himself, or cease to keep covenant with them: Those whom free-grace hath brought into covenant, shall continue in covenant for ever and ever, once in covenant and for ever in covenant. The Covenant of grace is bottomed upon Gods immutable counsel and purpose. *The foundation of God standeth sure*; that is, the decree and purpose of Gods election stands firm and sure. Now the purpose of Gods election is compared to a foundation, because it is that upon which all our happiness and blessedness is built and bottomed, and because as a foundation

Psal. 89. 30.-35. Jer. 31. 31. cap. 32. 38, 39, 40, 41. Isa. 54. 10. Heb. 8. 8. 10.

Heb. 6. 17. 2 Tim. 2. 19.

John 10. 28. 29, 30, 31, 32. 1 Pet. 1. 5. Jude 1.

tion it abides firm and ſure. The Covenant of grace is bottomed upon Gods glorious power, upon Gods infinite power, upon Gods ſupreme power, upon Gods invincible power, upon Gods independent power, upon Gods incomparable power, and till you can find a power that can overmatch this Divine power, the Saints covenant-relation holds good. The Covenant of grace is bottomed upon the oath of God; *To perform the mercy promiſed to our Fathers, and to remember his holy Covenant, the oath which he ſware to our Fathers.* Now to think that God will break his oath, or be perjured, is an intolerable blaſphemy. The Covenant of grace is bottomed upon the precious blood of Chriſt; the blood of Chriſt is called, *The blood of the everlaſting Covenant. Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jeſus, that great Shepherd of the ſheep, through the blood of the everlaſting Covenant.* Now by theſe hints it is moſt evident, that the Saints covenant-relation, their covenant-intereſt holds good at all times, in all caſes, and in all conditions. It is not the indwelling power of ſin, nor ſpiritual deſertions, nor violent temptations, nor heavy afflictions, nor Divine delays, that can diſſolve our covenant-relation. Though ſin may work, and Satan may tempt, and fears may be high, and God may hide his face from his People, and ſtop his ears at the prayers of his People, yet God will ſtill maintain his intereſt in his People, and his Peoples relation to himſelf. *God hath not caſt away his People, whom he foreknew*, Rom. 11. 2. *I am the Lord, I change not*, Mal. 3. 6. *I will betroth thee unto me for ever*, Hoſ. 2. 19. *I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee*, Heb. 13. 5. It is not all the powers of Hell, nor all the powers on Earth, that can make null, or void our covenant-relation, our covenant-intereſt. But,

Luke 1. 72. 73.

Mat. 26. 28. Heb. 9 15. ibid. 13. 20.

Iſa. 8. 17. Lam. 3. 44.

Seventeenthly and laſtly [*If God be with us, who can be againſt us?*] I anſwer, none, ſo as to hinder our growth in grace, or the thriving and flouriſhing eſtate of our precious and immortal ſouls. The troubles, afflictions, perſecutions, and ſufferings that the Saints meet with in a way

way of holyness, shall but further the increase and growth of their graces; grace never rises to so great a height as it does in times of persecution; Suffering times are a Christians harvest-times. Let me instance in that grace of of zeal: I remember *Moulin*, speaking of the French Protestants, saith, When Papists hurt us, and persecute us for reading the Scripture, we burn with zeal to be reading of them, but now persecution is over, our Bibles are like old Almanacks. *Michal's* scoffing at *David* did but inflame and raise his zeal; *If this be to be vile, I will be more vile.* Look as fire in the Winter burns the hotter (by an *Antiperistasis*) because of the coldness of the air, so in the winter of persecution, that Divine fire, the zeal of a Christian, burns so much the hotter, and flames forth so much the more vehemently and strongly. When one desired to know, what kind of man *Basil* was, there was presented to him in a dream (saith the Historian) a pillar of fire, with this Motto (*Talis est Basilius*) *Basil is such a one*, he is all on a light fire for God. Warm persecutions will but set Christians all on a light fire for God, as you may see among the Apostles, primitive Christians, & the Martyrs of a later date. Grace usually is in the greatest flourish, when the Saints are under the greatest tryals; the snuffing of the candle makes it burn the brighter: God suffers wicked men to beat & bruise his links, to make them burn the brighter; and to pound & bruise his spices, to make them send forth the greater aromatical savour; fiery trials are like the Tezel, which though it be sharp and scratching, it is to make the cloth more pure and fine. Stars shine brightest in the darkest nights, and so do the graces of the Saints shine brightest in the darkest nights of affliction and tribulation. God does sometimes more carry on the growth of grace by a Crois than by an ordinance; yea the Lord will first or last turn all fiery Trials into Ordinances, for the helping of grace in his Peoples souls. Commonly the Saints spiritual growth in grace is carried on by such Divine methods, and in such wayes

Psalm 69. 7, 8, 9, 12.

2 Sam. 6. 20, 21, 22.

as might seem to deaden grace, and weaken it rather than any wayes to augment and encrease it. We know that winter is as necessary to bring on Harvest as the Spring; and so fiery Trials are as necessary to bring on the Harvest of grace as the Spring of mercy is. Though fiery Trials are grievous, yet they shall make the Saints more gracious: God usually by smart sufferings turns his Peoples sparks of grace into a mighty flame, their mites into millions, their drops into Seas. All the Devils in hell and all the sinners on earth, cannot hinder the Lord from carrying on the growth of grace in his Peoples Souls. When Men and Devils have done their worst, God will by all sorts of Ordinances, and by all sorts of providences, and all sorts of changes make his People more and more holy, and more and more humble, and more and more meek and lowly, and more and more heavenly, wise, faithful, fruitful, sincere, couragious, &c. Though the Church of *Smyrna* was outwardly poor, yet she was inwardly rich, rich in grace, and rich towards God. I think he hit the mark who said, it is far better to be a poor man and a rich Christian, than to be a rich man and a poor Christian. Though the Corinthians were under great tryals and sufferings, yet they did abound in every thing, in faith, & utterance & knowledge, & diligence, & in their love to Gospel Ministers. The storm beat hard upon the Romans, and yet you see what a singular testimony the Apostle gives of them. *I my self also am perswaded of you my Brethren, that ye also are full of goodness filled with all knowledge able to admonish one another.* The Thessalonians were under great persecutions and troubles, and yet were strong in the grace that was in Christ Jesus; they were very growing and flourishing Christians: singular Prophecies speak out the Saints growth and flourishing in grace. The Lord is exalted, for he dwelleth on high, he hath filled *Zion* with judgement and righteousness. The Spirit shall be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness shall be a fruitful field. The

Rev. 2. 9.

2 Cor. 8. 7.

Rom. 15. 14.

2 Thess. 3. 10.
2 Thess. 1, 3. 8.

Isa. 33. 5.

Isa. 32. 15.
Cap. 35. 1.

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deſart ſhall rejoyce and bloſſom as the roſe, it ſhall bloſſom abundantly, the glory of *Libanon* ſhall be given unto it: The excellency of *Carmel* and *Sharon*, they ſhall ſee the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God. And as ſingular prophecies ſo choice, and precious promiſes ſpeak out the Saints growth in grace take a taſte of ſome of them. *But the path of the juſt, is as the ſhining light, that ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day. The righteous ſhall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands ſhall be ſtronger and ſtronger. They ſhall go from ſtrength to ſtrength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God. The righteous ſhall flouriſh like the palm-tree, he ſhall grow like a Cedar in Libanon. Thoſe that be planted in the houſe of the Lord, ſhall flouriſh in the Courts of our God, in old age they ſhall be fat and flouriſhing.* I have read of an Old-man, who being asked, whether he grew in grace? Anſwered, I believe I do, for God hath promiſed that in old age his children ſhould be fat and flouriſhing. So *Iſa.* 46. 3. *Hearken unto me O houſe of Jacob, and all the remnant of the houſe of Iſrael which are born by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb.* Verſe 4. *And even to your old age I am he, and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made and I will bear, even I will carry and will deliver you.* Zach. 12. 8. *And he that is feeble among them at that day ſhall be as David, and the houſe of David ſhall be as God, as the Angel of the Lord before them.* Hoſea 14. 5. *I will be as the dew unto Iſrael, he ſhall grow as the Lilly, and caſt forth his roots as Libanon.* Verſe 6. *His branches ſhall ſpread, and his beauty ſhall be as the olive-tree, and his ſmell as Libanon.* Verſe 7. *They that dwell under his ſhadow ſhall return, they ſhall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine, the ſcent thereof ſhall be as the wine of Libanon.* Malach. 4. 2. *But unto you that fear my Name, ſhall the Sun of righteouſneſs ariſe with healing under his wings, and ye ſhall go forth and grow up as the calves of the ſtall.* Pſalm 1. 3. *He ſhall be like a tree planted by the [illegible] of waters, that bringeth forth*

Prov. 4. 18. Job 17. 9. Pſalm 84. 7. Pſa. 92. 12, 13, 14.

his fruit in his season, his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doth shall prosper. John 4. 14. *Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up to Eternal life.* The light and glory of the Church rises by degrees. 1. Looking forth as the morning with a little light. 2. Fair as the Moon, more light. 3. Clear as the Sun, that is come up to a higher degree of spiritual light, life and glory: By all which it is most evident, that all the powers of Hell, nor all the powers on Earth cannot hinder the Saints growth in grace, nor the thriving and flourishing estate of their precious and immortal souls.

Cant. 6. 10.

But you will say, what are the reasons why God will be favourably, signally and eminently present with his People, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses and most deadly dangers. I answer there are these ten great Reasons for it.

1 Reason.

First, To awaken and convince the Enemies of his People, & to render his suffering children glorious in the very eyes and consciences, both of sinners and Saints, *Dan.* 3. 24. *Then Nebuchadnezzar the King was astonied and rose up in haste, and spake and said unto his Counsellors, did we not cast three men into the fire? They answered and said unto the King, True, O King.* Verse 25. *He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.* Now see what a majesty there is in this presence of Christ with his People in the fire, to convince *Nebuchadnezzar*; and to render the three Champions very glorious in his eyes. Verse 28. *Then Nebuchadnezzar spake and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath sent his Angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the Kings word, and yielded their bodies, that that they might not serve, nor worship any God except their own God.* Verse 29. *Therefore I make a decree, that every people, nation and language, which speak[illegible] thing amiss against the*

Ponder upon these Scriptures, Micha 7. 8, 9, 10, 16, 17. Psalm 126. 1, 2. Exod. 8. 19. Isa. 60. 13, 14. Rev. 3. 8, 9. Acts 4. 13. Cap. 6. 15. John 7. 44, 45, 46, &c.

the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghil, because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort. Verse 30. *Then the King promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego in the Province of Babylon.* The presence of the Lord with the three Children commanded favour, respect, reverence and honour from this great Monarch *Nebuchadnezzar.* The presence of God with his People is very Majestical, the greatest Monarchs have fallen down before it; not only *Nebuchadnezzar*, but also *Darius* falls down before the signal presence of God with *Daniel*, when he was in the Lions den. And *Herod* falls down before the presence of God with *John.* And King *Joash* falls down before the presence of God with *Jehojada.* And *Saul* falls down before the presence of God with *David: Thou are more righteous than I*, &c. And *Alexander* the Emperour falls down before the presence of God in *Joddus* the High-Priest. In the signal presence of God with his People in their affliction, there is such a sparkling lustre that none can behold it, but must admire it, and bow before the graceful Majesty of it: such has been the signal presence of God with the Martyrs in their fiery trials, that many have been convinced and converted. I have read of a Citizen of Paris, who was burnt for Protestantism, how the presence of God did so shine in his courage and constancy, that many did curiously enquire into that Religion, for which he so stoutly and resolutely suffered, so that the number of Sufferers was much increased thereby. I read that *Cicilia* a poor Virgin, by her gracious behaviour in her Martyrdom, was the means of converting four hundred to Christ. It was the observation of Mr. *John Lindsay*, that the very smoak of Mr. *Hamilton* converted as many as it blew upon. *Alexandrinus* cites *Plato*, expressing himself thus: Although a righteous man be tormented, although his eyes be digged out, yet he remains a blessed Man. The same *Plato* could say, That no gold or precious stone doth glister so gloriously as the

Dan. 6. 20.-- ult. Mark 6. 20. 2 Kings 11, 1, 2. 1 Sam. 24 17.

History of the Council of Trent. pag. 418. 2. Edit.

Clemens Alex. Strom. l. 4. p. 495.

prudent Spirit of a good man. And the very Hittites could say of *Abraham*, who had a very signal presence of God with him: *Thou art a Prince of God among us*; not that he was a King or had any Authority over them, as the *Septuagint* reads, *Thou art a King from God among us*. But he is called a Prince of God, say some, because he was as Gods Oracle (the Lord speaking to him by visions and dreams) unto whom they had recourse for counsel in difficult matters. Others say, he is called Prince of God, because God prospered him, and made him famous for his virtue and godliness. But the Hebrews commonly speak so of all things that are notable and excellent, because all excellency cometh from God: As the Angel of God, the Mount of God, the City of God, the wrestlings of God, &c. *Thou art a Prince of God*, that is thou art a most excellent Person. *Seneca* saw so much excellency that Morality put upon a man, that he could say (*Ipse aspectus boni viri delectat*) *The very looks of a good man delights one.* And why then may not the Sons of *Hesh* call him a Prince of God, from that majesty and glory that they saw shine forth in his graces, and in his gracious behaviour and conversation; and because they did observe a signal presence of God with him in all he did, it being no higher observation than what *Abimelech* had made before them. *Chrysostom* speaking of *Babylas* the Martyr, saith, *Magnus atque admirabilis vir*, &c. *He was an excellent and admirable man*, &c. *Tertullian* writing to some of the Martyrs (who had a mighty presence of God with them) saith (*Non tantus sum ut vos alloquar*, &c.) *I am not good enough to speak unto you.* Oh! that my life and a thousand more such wretches might go for yours, &c. In Queen *Marie*'s days (not of blessed but of abhorred memory) the People of God met sometimes 40. sometimes 100. sometimes 200. together, the fiery persecutors of that day sent in one among them, to spy out their practices, & to give information of their names, that they might be brought to *Smithfield* shambles: But there was such a presence of God in

Genes. 23. 6.

Lyran. Tostat.

Exod. 3. 2. Cap. 4. 37. Psalm 26. 4. Gen. 30. 8.

Gen. 21. 22.

Fox Acts Mon. 1881.

the

the Assembly of his People, that this Infidel was convinced and converted, and cryed them all mercy. 1 Cor. 14. 24. *But if all prophesie, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all.* Verse 25. *And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest, and so falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.* It may be before they came to the Assembly of the Saints, they had hard thoughts of the People of God, they thought that folly was in them, or that disloyalty was in them, or that madness and rebellion was in them, or that plots and designs against the Government was in them, or that the Devil was in them. O but now such a Majestical presence of God appears in the midst of his People, that the Unbeliever is convinced and confesses *that God is in them of a truth.* Blessed *Bradford* had such a signal presence of God with him in his sufferings, as begot great reverence and admiration, not only in the hearts of his Friends, but in the very hearts of very many Papists also. *Henry* the Second King of France, being present at the Martyrdome of a poor Taylor, who was burnt by him for his Religion, the poor man had such a signal presence of God with him in his sufferings, that his courage and boldness, his holy and gracious behaviour did so amaze and terrifie the King, that he swore at his going away, that he never would be present at such a sight more. As the presence of God is the greatest ornament of the Church triumphant, so the presence of God is the greatest ornament of the Church militant. The redness of the Rose, the whiteness of the Lilly, and all the beauties of Sun, Moon and Stars, are but deformities, to that beauty and glory that the presence of God puts upon his people, in all their troubles and trials. There is nothing in the world that will render the Saints so amiably and lovely, so eminent and excellent in the eyes of their Enemies, as the signal presence of God with them in their greatest trials. *Demetrius* was so passing fair of face and countenance, that no God Pain-

Acts & Monum. page 1458.

Epist. Hist. Gal. 82.

Plutarch in the life of *Demetrius.*

Painter was able to draw him; the presence of God with his People in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, puts so rare a beauty and glory upon them, that no Painter can ever be able to draw them. But

2. Reason. A second reason, Why God will be signally present with his People in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, is drawn from the Covenant of grace, and those precious promises that

Jer. 32. 40, 41. Heb. 13. 5. God has made to be with his People. Gods Covenant is, that he will be with his People for ever, and that he will never turn away from them to do them good. That's a branch of the Covenant: *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* And that's a branch of the Covenant: *I*

Genes. 15. 1. See Psalm 115. 9, 10, 11. *am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.* The shield is between the body and the thrust. So saith God, I will put in betwixt thee and harm; though those Kings whom thou hast even now vanquished, may rant high and threaten revenge, yet I will shield off all dangers, that thou maist be incident to. Though Gods People be in the waters and in the fires, yet his promise is to

Isa. 43. 2. Psalm 91. 15. Psalm 50. 15. Job 5. 19. Hosea 2. 14. be with them; so the Psalmist, *I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him, and honour him.* God will not fail to keep his People company in all their troubles, no storm, no danger, no distress, no fiery trial can keep God and his People asunder. God is immutable in his nature, in his counsels, in his Covenant, and in all his

Malach. 3. 6. promises; though all Creatures are subject to change, yet God is unchangeable; though Angels and Men, and all inferiour Creatures are dependent, yet God is independent: He is as the School-men say (*omnino immutabilis*) *Altogether immutable*, and therefore he will be sure to keep touch with his People. Precious promises are *Pabulum fidei, & humor fidei, The food of Faith, and the very soul of Faith.* They are a Mine of rich treasures, a Garden full of choice flowers, able to enrich a suffering Christian with all Celestial contentments, and to sweeten the deepest distresses. God has deeply engaged himself, both

both by Covenant and promises, that he will be with his People in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, and therefore he will not fail them, *Deut. 7. 9. Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God which keepeth Covenant*, &c. or the God of *Amen*. God will never suffer his faithfulness to fail, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his mouth: All his precepts, menaces, predictions, and promises are the issue of a most wise, holy, faithful, and righteous will, and therefore they shall certainly be made good to his People. But Psalm 89. 33.

Thirdly, The Lord will be signally present with his People in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, because it makes most eminently for the advancement of his own honour and glory in the world. God never gets more honour than by helping his People when they are at a dead lift. Gods signal presence with *Israel* at the red Sea, makes *Moses* sing a Song of praise. A great part of the revenue of Divine glory arises from the special presence of God with his People in their deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, as you may see by comparing the Scriptures in the Margin together. 'Tis the honour of a Husband to be most present with his Wife in her greatest troubles, and the honour of a Father to be most present with his Children in their deepest distresses, and the honour of Commanders to be present with their Souldiers in the heat of Battel, when many fall on their right hand and on their left. *Exod.* 15. 3. *The Lord is a man of war*, (that is an excellent warriour) *the Lord is his name*, according to the Septuagint, ὁ συντρίβων πολέμους, *He breaketh battels, and subdueth war*. God like a brave Commander stands upon his honour, and therefore he will stand by his Souldiers in the greatest dangers. The word *Ish* here used for Man, signifies an eminent man, a mighty man, a famous warriour, or as the Chaldee Paraphrast hath it, *Victor bellorum*, *An overcomer of Battels*. Now eminent warriours, mighty warriours, famous warriours, they 3. Reason, Exod. 15. Exod. 15. Judges 5. Psalm 23. 4, 6. Isai. 43. 2, 3, 7.

they always stick closest to their Souldiers, in their greatest dangers, as all know that have read either Scripture or History. Now the Lord is such a man of war, such a famous warriour, as that he will be sure to stick closest to his People in the greatest dangers. And as there is nothing that more raises the honour, fame, and renown of great warriours in the world, than their presence with their Souldiers when the bullets fly thickest, so there is nothing, by which God gets himself a greater name, fame, and honour in the world, than by his signal presence with his People, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers. But

Isa. 52. 12. God is both in the Van and in the Rear.

4. Reason.

Fourthly, The Lord will be signally present with his People in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, because then his people stands in most need of his presence. A Believer needs the presence of God at all times, but never so much as in great troubles, deep distresses and most deadly dangers. For now Satan will be stirring, he loves to fish in troubled waters; now earthly Friends, and earthly comforts, and earthly succours will commonly fail us; now cares, and fears, will be multiplied upon us; now unbelief which is virtually all evil, will be raising doubts, and cavils, and objections in the soul; so that if God does not stand by us now, what can we say? what can we do? how can we bear up? how can we stand fast? What was *Sampson* that man of strength when his hair was gone, but as weak as water? and what is the strongest Christian when his God is gone, but as weak as weakness it self? all our doing strength, and all our suffering strength, and all our bearing strength, and all our witnessing strength lies in the special presence of God with our souls; all our comforts, and all our supports, and all our ease, and all our refreshments flow from the presence of God with our souls, in our greatest troubles and deepest distresses, and therefore if God should leave us in a day of trouble, what would become of us, and whither should we go, and where

Job 2. 9. Job 19. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. Psalm 88. ult. Isa. 41. 17, 18.

Judges 16. 19, 20.

where should we find rest? when doth a man need a Brother or Friend, but in a day of adversity? A Brother is born for adversity, though at other times Brethren may jar, and jangle, and quarrel, yet in a day of adversity, in a strait, in a straits, birth, and good blood, and good nature will be working. Adversity breeds love and unity. *Ridley* and *Hooper* differed very much about Ceremonies in the day of their liberty, but when they were both Prisoners in the Tower then they could agree well enough, and then they could be mutual comforts one to another; and when does a Christian most need the strength of God, the consolations of God, the supports of God, the teachings and quickenings of God, and the signal singular presence of God, but when they are in the greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers? When the People of God are in a low and afflicted condition, then the Lord knows that that is the season of seasons for him to grace them with his gracious presence: when calamities and dangers break in upon us, and when all heads, and hands, and hearts, and counsels are set against us; now is the time for God to help us, for God to succour us, for God to stand by us. But.

Prov. 17. 17.

Isa. 33. 2. 10.

Fifthly, the Lord will be signally present with his People in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, because he dearly loves them. God entirely loves his People, and therefore he will not leave his People; persons whom we entirely love we cannot leave, especially when they are in a distressed condition. *A friend loves at all times*, saith *Solomon*, and God is such a friend. God loves not by fits and starts, as many do, but his love is like himself sincere and stedfast, because he loves them, he won't forsake them when they are in the greatest troubles and most terrible dangers. 1 *Sam.* 12. 22. *For the Lord will not forsake his People, for his great Names sake; because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his People.* He chose you for his love, and he still loveth you for his choice, and therefore he won't forsake you;

5 Reason.

Deut. 7. 6, 7, 8. *Amat quia amat*, Bernard.

Prov. 17. 17.

Chide you he may, but forsake you he will not: for it will not stand with the glory of God to leave a People, to forsake a People of his love. Should I cast you off whom I love, the Heathen Nations would say, that I was mutable in my purposes, or unfaithful in my promises. Though *David*'s Parents forsook him, yet God did not forsake him, but took him up into his care and keeping. It is the deciding question which the enemies of the Saints put to them, in the time of their greatest troubles, deep distresses, and most deadly dangers, *Ubi Deus? Where is now your God?* But they may safely and groundedly return this answer, when they are at lowest, *Hic Deus, Our God is here*; he is nigh unto us, he is round about us, and he is in the midst of us. Witness that golden promise, that is more worth than a world, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* God is a God of bowels, a God of great pity, a God of tender compassion, and therefore he will not leave his People in a time of distress. Parents bowels do most yearn towards their Children when they are sick, and weak, and most in danger; it goes to the very heart of a man to leave a friend in misery: but what are the bowels of men to the bowels of God! or the compassions of men to the compassions of God! There is an Ocean of love in the hearts of Parents towards their children, when they are in distress, and this love makes them sit by their children, and sit up with their children, and not stir from their children: Gods love does so sink his heart to his People in their deep distresses, that he can't leave them, he can't stir from them, Isa. 43. 4. *Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee.* Well, and what then? This love so engageth and unites God to his People that he can't leave them, he can't stir one foot from them, V. 2. *When thou passest through the Waters I will be with thee, and through the Rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.* The Lord dearly loves his People, and he highly prizes his People, and he greatly

Psa. 27. 10.

Psalm 79. 10.

Isa. 52. 12.

Heb. 13. 5, 11. Hos. 8. 9. Mich. 7. 19. Jer. 31. 18, 19, 20.

2 Sam. 19. 6.

Psalm 91. 15.

delights in his People, and therefore he will be signally present with his People, both in the fire and on the waters, both in the fire of persecution, and in the waters of affliction. God loves the persons of his People, and he loves the presence of his People, and he loves the graces of his People, and he loves the services of his People, and he loves the fellowship of his People, and therefore he will never leave his People, but stand by them, and be signally present with them in their greatest troubles & deepest distresses. Such is Gods singular love to his Covenant-People, that he will neither forsake them, nor forget them in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers. The Jews were low, yea very low in *Babylon*, their distresses were great, and their dangers many, they looked upon themselves as so many dead men, *Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we are cut off for our parts.* They looked upon themselves both as forsaken and forgotten by God. Behold, captive *Sion* lamentingly saith: *The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.* *Sion* is taken several ways in Scripture: 1. For the place properly so called, where they were wont to meet to worship the Lord, but this place was long ago destroyed. 2. For the blessed Angels, *Ye are come to mount Sion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of Angels.* 3. For the congregation of Saints, of Believers, of which it is said, *The Lord loves the Gates of Sion more than all the habitations of Jacob.* The believing Jews being sorely oppressed & afflicted by a long captivity, and by many great and matchless miseries, that did befal them in their captive state, they look upon God, as one that had quite forsaken them and forgotten them, but they were under a very high mistake, and very erronious in their complaint, as appears by Gods answer to *Sion*, Verse 15. *Can a Woman forget her sucking Child, that she should not have compassion on the Son of her womb? yea they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.* Verse 16. *Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me.* Thus

Ezek. 37. 1. to 13.

Isa. 49. 13. to 18. Psalm 84. 7. Isa. 1. 27. Heb. 12. 22.

Psalm 87. 2.

Dan. 9. 22. Lam. 4[illegible]

these words as in a christal glass, you may see, how pathetically, how sweetly, how graciously, how readily, how resolutely God doth engage himself, that he will neither forsake *Sion*, nor yet forget *Sion* in her captive state. Now let us a little observe how this singular promise is amplified, and that, 1. By an emphatical illustration, Gods compassionate remembring of *Sion*, far transcends the most compassionate remembrance of the tendrest Mother to her dear sucking Babe. Now this is laid down.

First, interrogatively, *Can a Woman* (the most affectionate sex) *forget her sucking Child, from having compassion on the Son of her womb?* Can a Woman, can a Mother so forget as not to compassionate a Child, which she naturally inclines to pity? A sucking Child that hangeth on her breast, such as Mothers are wont to be most chary of, and to be most tenderly affected towards? her sucking Child, which together with the milk from the breast draws love from her heart? her sucking Child of her own womb, which her bowels do more yearn over than they do over any sucking Nurs-child in the world? and this the *Son of her womb*, which the Mother usually embraceth with more warm affections, than the Daughter of her womb. Can a Woman, yea can a Mother forget to exercise love, pity, and compassion to such a poor Babe? surely, very, rarely.

2. Affirmatively, *Yea they may forget.* Its possible that a Woman may be so unwomanly, and that a Mother may be so unmotherly in some cases, and in some extremities, as to forget her sucking Child; yea as to eat the fruit of her womb, as the pitiful Women did boil and eat their own children in the siege of *Samaria* and *Jerusalem*. Extremity of hunger overmastred natural affections, and made the pitiful Mothers require of their children those lives, which not long before they had given them, laying their children not in her bosoms, but in their bowels.

2 Kings 6.24. to 30. Lam. 4.10.

Thirdly, negatively, *Yet will I not forget thee.* God will be more constantly, unmovably, and unchangeably

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mindful of *Sion*, and tender of *Sion*, and compassionate of *Sion*, and watchful over *Sion*, than any Mother could be over her youngling, yea he would be more motherly to his poor captives in *Babylon*, than any Mother could be to her sucking Babe. 2. This precious promise is amplified by a convincing argumentation, and that partly from his *engraving of them upon the palms of his hands*. This is an allusion, say some, to those that carry about with them engraven on some tablet, or on the stone of some ring, which they wear on their finger, the mark, name, or picture of some person they entirely affect; their portraiture, their memorial was like a signet graven upon his hand. God will as soon blot out of mind, and forget his own hands as his *Sion*; and partly, from his placing their walls still in his sight; the ruined demolished walls of *Jerusalem* were still before him as to their commiseration, and to their reparation, God being fully resolved in the fittest season, to raise and re-edifie them. Look, as the workman hath his model, or pattern, constantly either before his eye, or in his thoughts, or in his brain, that he is for to work by: So saith God, *Sion* is continually in my eye, *Sion* is still in my thoughts; I shall never forsake her, I shall never forget her. But,

Sixthly, the Lord will be signally present with his People in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, because of his propriety and interest in them, and his near and dear relation to them. *Isa.* 43. 1. *But now thus, saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name thou art mine.* Thou art mine for I have made thee, thou art mine for I have chosen thee, thou art mine for I have bought thee, I have purchased thee, thou art mine for I have called thee, thou art mine for I have redeemed thee, thou art mine for I have stampt mine image upon thee, thou art mine for I have put my Spirit into thee. Now mark what follows. *Verse* 2. *When thou passest through the Waters, I will be with thee, and through the Rivers, they shall not over-*

6 Reason.

Esa. 15. 16. 1 Cor. 6. 20. 1 Pet. 1. 18.

Ps. 4. 23. 24. 36. 26, 27.

overflow thee, when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. God will certainly keep his own People, his own Children company, both in the fire and in the water; that is, in those various tryals and troubles, that they are incident within this World. When should a Husband be with his wife, but when she is in greatest troubles? and a Father with his child, but when he is in deep distresses? and a General with his Army, but when they are in greatest dangers? When should the Physician be most with his Patient, but when he is most desperately sick? and when should the Shepherd be nearest his sheep, but when they are diseased, and the wolf is at hand? Now God you know stands in all these relations to his People, and therefore he will not fail to be near them, when troubles, distresses, and dangers are growing upon them. But,

Isa. 54. 5. Ps. 103. 13, 14. Exod. 15. 3. Mal. 4. 2. Mat. 9. 12. Psalm 23. 1.

7 Reason.

Seventhly, the Lord will be signally present with his People in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers; because such times are commonly times of great and sore temptations; when Gods hand is heaviest then Satan will be busiest; the Devil is never more violent in his temptations, than when the Saints are under afflictions. Jam. 1. 2. *My Brethren, count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations* (that is, afflictions.) Verse 12. *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation* (that is affliction.) 2 Pet. 2. 9. *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation* (that is, out of affliction.) Now, affliction is called temptation, not in the vulgar sence, as temptation is put for an occasion or inducement to sin, but in its proper and native signification, as its taken for probation and tryal; thus God is said to tempt *Abraham*, that is, he did try and prove the faith, the fear, the love, the obedience of *Abraham*. Afflictions are called temptations, partly, because as afflictions will try what mettle we are made off, so will temptations; and partly because as afflictions are but dolorous and grievous to us; So are temptations. But mainly afflictions are called temptations, because in time of affli-

Job 2. 7, 8. Mat. 9. 4. Heb. 2, 18.

Gen. 22, 1.

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ction Satan will be sifting and winnowing of the Saints. Now he will make use of all his devices, methods, depths, darts, yea fiery darts, that he may vex, afflict, trouble, grieve, wound, torture, and torment those dear hearts that God would not have grieved and wounded; and therefore now the Lord steps in and stands by his People, and by his favourable, signal, and refreshing presence he bears up their heads above water, and keeps their hearts from fainting and sinking, under Satans most dangerous and desperate temptations. When a City is besieged, and the enemies have raised their batteries, and have made breaches upon their walls, and their provisions grow low, O then if ever there is need of succour and relief! So here. But,

Luk. 22. 31. 2 Cor. 12. 7. 2 Cor. 2. 11. Eph. 6. 11. Rev. 2. 24. Eph. 6. 16.

Eighthly, the Lord will be signally present with his People in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, because he highly prizes them, and setts an honourable value and esteem upon them Isa. 43. 4. *Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee* (Heb. *In thy room*, or *in thy stead*) *and people for thy life*; That is, for thy preservation and protection. God setts such a mighty price upon his People, that to preserve them from ruine and destruction, he makes nothing of giving up to the sword and destruction the most rich, strong, populous, and warlike Nations in the World. Now the high price and value that he setts upon them, engages him to be present with them, Verse 2. *When thou passest through the Waters, I will be with thee; and through the Rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.* Them we highly prize, we won't leave in a day of distress, no more won't God. God prizes his People as his peculiar Treasure; Exod. 19. 5. *As his Portion.* Deut. 32. 9. *As his pleasant Portion.* Jer. 12. 10. *As his Jewels.* Mal. 3. 17. *As his Glory.* Isa. 4. 5. *As his Crown and Royal Diadem.* So he prizes the poorest, the meanest, and the weakest Saint

8 Reason.

Verse 2

in the World above a multitude, yea above a world of Sinners. Heb. 11. 37, 38. *Of whom the world was not worthy.* Though they did not ruffle in silks and velvets, but were clad *in sheeps-skins and goats-skins*; yet they had that inward excellency, as that the world was not worthy of their company; and though they did not dwell in cieled Houses, nor in stately Palaces, but *in Deserts and Mountains, and in Dens and Caves of the earth*; yet the vile sinful persecuting World was not worthy of their presence, or prayers, or of their prudent counsels, or pious examples, &c. God sets a higher value upon a *Job*, Job 1. 1. cap. 2. 3. though on a Dunghil, than upon an *Ahab*, though on his Royal Throne. God values men by their inward excellencies, and not by their outward dignities and worldly glories: He sets a higher price upon a *Lazarus* in his tattered rags, than upon a rich *Dives* in his purple robes. Such persons have most of our company, whom Job 2. 11, 12, 13. we prize most. *Job*'s three Friends did highly value him, and therefore in his deepest distresses, they own him, they pitty him, they weep over him, they accompany him, and they keep close unto him: because God highly prizes his People, he will be signally present with them in their greatest troubles and deepest distresses. But,

9 Reason. Ninthly, the Lord will be signally present with his People, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, because they won't leave him, but stick close to him, and to his interest, Gospel, and glory; Josh. 24. Jer. 13. 11. Acts 11. 23. and will cleave fast to his Word, worship, and wayes, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, come what will on't: You may take away my life (said *Basil*) but you cannot take away my comfort, my head but not my crown; yea (saith he) had I a thousand lives, I would lay them all down for my Saviours sake, who hath done abundantly more for me. *John Audley* profest to *Bonner*, when he told him of burning, and how ill he could endure it, That if he had as many lives as he had hairs on his head, he would lose them

them all in the fire, before he would lose his Christ, or part with his Christ. It was a common thing among the Martyrs, to make all hast to the fire, lest they should miss of that noble entertainment. *Gordius* the Martyr said, it is to my loss if ye bate me any thing of my sufferings. The sooner I die, said another, the sooner I shall be happy. Psal. 63. 1. *O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee, my soul thirsteth for thee in a dry and thirsty Land, where no water is.* Verse 8. *My soul followeth hard after thee*, &c. This notes; 1. The strength of his intention. 2. The strength of his affection. 3. The constancy of his pursuit; and all this in a dry and barren wilderness, and in the face of all discouragements, and in the want of all outward encouragements. What ever the danger or distress be, the Psalmist is peremptorily resolved to cleave close to the Lord, and to follow hard after the Lord, Psalm 44. 17. *All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy Covenant.* Verse 18. *Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way.* Verse 19. *Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of Dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.* In the face of all dangers, deaths, distresses, miseries, &c. Gods faithful Servants will own the Lord, and cleave to his wayes, and keep close to his worship and service, let Persecutors do their worst. Verse 22. *Yea for thy sake are we killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.* It is a question when, and upon what occasion this Psalm was written; Some think that it was written upon occasion of the 70 years captivity in *Babylon*: but this can't be, because that captivity was the fruit and product of their high iniquities, as the Scriptures do every where evidence. They could not say in *Babylon*: *for thy sake, we are killed all the day long*; but for sins sake, for our wickedness sake we are killed all the day long. It is more probable that this Psalm was prenned upon the occasion of the horrible persecution of the Church under *Antiochus Epiphanes*; unto which I guess *Paul* hath reference

Dan. 9. 3. Psalm 119. 20.

See 2 Tim. 1. 11, 12. cap. 2. 8, 9, 10. Eph. 6. 19, 20. Col. 4. 3, 18.

Rom. 8. 36.

Dan. 9. 11, 12, 13, 14.

towards the latter end of that 11. to the *Hebrews*. In this 22. Verse you have three things observable, 1. The greatness of their sufferings, *They were killed*; amplified by a similitude, *As sheep to the slaughter*. 2. The cause, not for their sin, but *for thy sake*. 3. The continuance how long, even *all the day long*. Their sufferings are great and long, that Tyrant *Antiochus* made no more reckoning of taking away of their lives, than a Butcher doth of cuting the throats of the poor sheep, and as Butchers kill the sheep without making conscience of the effusion of their blood, even so did that Tyrant *Antiochus* destroy the saints of the most high, without making the least conscience of shedding innocent blood; and as Butchers think well of their work, and are glad when they have butchered the poor sheep, so did this Tyrant *Antiochus*, he thought he did God good service in butchering of the holy People, and rejoyced in that bloody service; and yet notwithstanding all the dreadful things that these blessed souls suffered, they still kept close to God, and close to his Covenant, and close to his wayes, and close to his worship. And *Austin* observes, that though the Heathen sought to suppress the growth of Christianity by binding, butchering, racking, stoning, burning, &c. yet still they increased and multiplyed, and still they kept close to God and his wayes. The Church was at first founded in blood, and it has thriven best when it has been moistned with blood; it was at first founded in the blood of Christ, and ever since it has been moistned or watered, as it were, with the blood of the Martyrs. The Church of Christ in all Ages hath been like the oak, which liveth by his own wounds, and the more limbs are cut off, the more new sprours. O how close to God his wayes and worship did the Saints keep in the Ten Persecutions; *they have followed the Lamb, whither ever he went*; If they would have complyed with the wayes of the World, and the worship of the World, and the customs of the World, they might have had ease, honour, riches, preferments, &c. but nothing

Dan. 11.

Aug. lib. 22 de Civit. Dei. c. 6 Exod. 1. 12.

Rev. 14. 4, 5. Heb. 11. 35.

nothing could work them off from God or his wayes, and therefore he will certainly stand by them, and cleave to them, and be signally present with them in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers. But,

Tenthly, the Lord will be signally present with his People in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, that they may be joyful and chearful under all their troubles, and that they may glory in all their tribulations. It is good to have a patient Spirit, but it is better to have a joyful Spirit in all our sufferings, troubles, distresses, &c. that we meet with in a way of well-doing. Acts 5. 40. *And to him they agreed, and when they had called the Apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the Name of Jesus, and let them go.* Verse 41. *And they departed from the presence of the Council, rejoycing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his Name.* In the Original, ὅτι καταξιωθέντες ἀτιμασθῆναι, *That they were honoured to be dishonoured for Christ.* They looked upon it as a high honour, to be dishonoured for Christ, & as a grace to be disgraced for Christ. It was the Divine presence that made *Paul* & *Silas* to sing, when they were accounted troublers of towns, and when they were beaten with many stripes, and cast into prison, into the inner prison, and laid neck and heels together, as the word τὸ ξύλον notes. The Divine presence made *Paul* and *Silas* to glory in all their stripes, sores, and wounds, as old Souldiers glory in their scars and wounds, which they receive in battle for their Prince and Country. The Divine presence might well make *Paul* and *Silas* to say of their stripes & sores, as *Muncer* once said of his ulcers, *Hæ sunt gemmæ & pretiosa ornamenta Dei; These are the Jewels and the precious ornaments, with which God adorns his dearest Servants.* It was the Divine presence that made *Ignatius* say, in the midst of all his sufferings, τὰ δεσμά μου περιφέρω ὡς πνευματικὰς μαργαρίτας, *I bear my bonds as so many spiritual pearls.* So 2 Cor. 7. 4. *I am filled with com-*

10 Reason. Mat. 5. 12. Lu. 6. 23.

Gre. Rejoyce & leap for joy. 2 Cor. 12. 10.

Acts 16. 20, 22, 23, 24.

Beza.

Ephes. 6. 17. Rom. 5. 3.

comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulations. Gr. ὑπερπερισσεύομαι, *I do overwhound with joy.* Verse 5. *For when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side, without were fightings, within were fears.* Verse 6. *Nevertheless, God that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us.* It was the Divine presence that filleth the Corinthians with exceeding comfort and joy when their flesh had no rest; and when they were troubled on every side, this signal presence of God with them in all their tribulations filled their souls with such an exuberancy of joy, that no good could match it, nor no evil over-match it. It was the Divine presence that made the Martyrs, both ancient & modern, so comfortable & cheerful under all their hideous sufferings. It was the Divine presence that made *Francisco Soyit* say to his Adversaries: You deprive me of this life, & promote me to a better, which is as if you should rob me of counters, & furnish me with gold. Oh how my heart leapeth for joy (said one) that I am so near the apprehension of eternal bliss! God forgive me mine unthankfulness and unworthyness of so great glory. In all the dayes of my life I was never so merry, as now I am in this dark Dungeon; believe me, there is no such joy in the world as the People of Christ have under the cross (said blessed *Philpot*) that went to Heaven in flames of fire. Let God but withdraw this signal presence from his People in their sufferings, and you will quickly find their hearts to droop, their spirits to fail, and they overwhelmed in a sea of sorrows, as you see in Mr. *Glover*, the Martyr, and many others. It was this Divine presence that made the primitive Christians to rejoyce more when they were condemned, than absolved, and to kiss the stake, and to thank the Executioner, and to sing in the flames, and to desire to be with Christ. So *Justin Martyr*, *Apol.* 1. *Adv. Gent. Gratias agimus quod à molestis Dominis liberemur, We thank you for delivering us from hard Task-masters, that we may more sweetly enjoy the bosom of Jesus Christ.* The Bee gatheres the besthoney of the

Act. and Mon. fol. 1668. 1669. 1670.

Magis damnati quam absoluti gaudemus, Tert. in Apol.

the bitterest herbs, and Christ made the best wine of water; certainly the best, the purest, the strongest, and the sweetest joyes spring from the signal presence of God with his People, in their greatest troubles, and deepest distresses; only remember this, that that joy that flowes from the Divine presence, in times of troubles and distress, it is an inward joy, a spiritual joy; a joy that lyes remote from a carnal eye; *The heart knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.* Prov. 14. 10. The joy of the Saints in sufferings is a Jewel that falls not under a strangers eye. The joy of a Christian lyes deep, it cannot be expressed, it cannot be painted; Look as no man can paint the sweetness of the Honey-comb, nor the sweetness of a cluster of Grapes, nor the fragrancy of the Rose of *Sharon:* so no man can paint out the sweetness and spiritualness of that joy, that the Divine presence raises in the soul, when a Christian is under the greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers. Holy joy is a treasure that lyes deep; and 'tis not every man that has a Golden Key to search into this Treasury. Look as a man, standing on the Sea shore sees a great heap of waters, one wave riding upon the back of another, and making a dreadful noise, but all this while though he sees the water rouling, and hears it raging and roaring, yet he sees not the wealth, the gold, the silver, the jewels, and incredible treasures that lye buried there: so wicked men they see the wants of the Saints, but not their wealth; they see their poverty, but not their riches; their miseries, but not their mercies; their conflicts, but not their comforts; their sorrows, but not their joyes. O this blind World cannot see the joyes, the comforts, the consolations, that the Divine presence raises in the souls of the Saints, when they are at worst! Holy joy and cheerfulness under great troubles and deep distresses, is an honour to God, a glory to Christ, and a credit to Religion; it stops the mouths of sinners, and it encourages and strengthens weak Saints; and therefore the Lord will be signally present with his

People

People in their greatest troubles, &c. that they may grace their suffering condition with joy and cheerfulness. And let thus much suffice for the reasons of the point.

But before I come to the useful application, to prevent the Objections, and to allay the fears and doubts, and disputes that may arise in the hearts of weak Christians, concerning this signal presence of God, I shall briefly lye down these following propositions.

1. Position.

First, That Christ is many times really present, when he is seemingly absent: *Genes.* 28. 16. *And Jacob said, surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not.* Choice Christians may have the presence of Christ really with them, when yet they may not be kindly sensible of his presence, nor yet affected with it. God is present every where, but especially with his Saints; and not only then when they are apprehensive of him, but when they perceive no evidence of his presence: Being awakened, he perceived that God had very graciously and gloriously appeared to him; and therefore he falls admiring and extolling the singular goodness, and the special kindness of God towards him: As if he had said, I thought that such strange and blessed apparitions were peculiar to the family of the faithful; I thought that God had only in this manner reveiled himself in my Fathers house: I did not in the least think or imagine that such an Apparition, such a Divine Revelation should happen to me in such a place; But now I find, that that God who is every where in respect of his general presence, he hath by the special testimonies of his presence, manifested himself to me also in this place. So *Job.* *Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not: he passeth on also, but I perceive him not.* So *Jonah*, *Jon.* 2. 4. *Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight, yet I will look again toward thy holy Temple.* In times of sore afflictions, Gods Children are very prone to have hard conceits of God, and heavy conceits of themselves: Unbelief raises fears, doubts, despondency, despair, and works a Christian many times, when he is under deep distresses, to draw very sad conclu-

Psalm 139.

Job 9. 11. Consult these Scriptures, Luke 24. 32. John 20. 13, 14, 15. Psalm 31, 22. Cant. 2. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Cap. 5, 6, 7, 8.

clusions against his own soul, *I am cast out of thy sight:* But this was but an hour of temptation, and therefore he soon recollects and recovers himself again: (*yet I will look again toward thine holy Temple.*) Here now Faith has got the upper hand of unbelief: In the former part of the Verse you have *Jonah* doubting and despairing, (*I am cast out of thy sight;*) but in the latter part of the Verse you have *Jonah* conquering and triumphing, (*yet I will look again toward thine holy Temple.*) When sense saith a thing will never be, and when reason saith such a thing can never be, Faith gets above sense and reason and saith: I but it shall be; what do you tell me of a roaring, raging Sea, of the belly of Hell, of the weeds about my head, of the billows and waves passing over my head; for yet as low as I am, and as forlorn as I am, *I will yet look towards Gods holy Temple.* I will eye God in the Covenant of grace, though I am in the Sea, though I am in the belly of hell, yet by Faith *I will look toward thy holy Temple* (toward which they were to pray) and triumph over all those difficulties, which formerly I looked upon as insuperable, I will pray and look, and look and pray, all which does clearly evidence a singular presence of God with him, even then when he peremptorily concludes, that he was cast out of Gods presence, out of his sight, out of his favour, out of his care, out of his heart. The Lord is many times really present with his People, when he is not sensibly present with his People. *Judg.* 6. 12. *And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him, and said unto him, the Lord is with thee thou mighty man of valour.* Ver. 13. *And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles, which our Fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? but now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.* God may be really present with his People, they may have his favourable presence with their inward man, when it goes very ill with their outward Man. Certainly we must

1 Kings 8.

God may sometimes appear terribly to those whom he loves entirely. Job 9. 34.

must frame a new Bible ere we can find any colour out of Gods afflicting us to prove that he doth not love us, or that he hath withdrawn his presence from us. Christ had never more of the real presence of his Father, than when he had least of his sensible presence, of his comfortable presence: *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Here is first a compellation or invocaton of God twice repeated: *My God, my God.* Secondly, the complaint it self, or matter complained of, touching Gods forsaking of him: Christ was forsaken of God in some sort, and he was very sensible of his Fathers withdrawing, though it was but in part, and for a time, *Why hast thou forsaken me?* This forsaking is not to be understood of his whole person, but of his humane nature only according to which, and in the which he now suffered on the Cross. Though the person of Christ suffered, and was forsaken, yet he was not forsaken in, or according to his whole Person, but in respect of his humane nature only. The Godhead of Christ could not be forsaken, for then God should have forsaken himself, which is impossible. The personal union of the God-head with the Man-hood of Christ, continued all the time of his passion and death, it was never dissolved, nor ever shall be; yea the Godhead did uphold the manhood all the time of Christs sufferings, so that he was not forsaken, when he was forsaken; he was not forsaken wholly, when he was forsaken in part. The love and favour of God the Father towards Jesus Christ did not ebb and flow, rise and fall; for God never loved Jesus Christ more, or better than at the time of his passion, when he was most obedient to his Fathers will. (*Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life for my Sheep,*) Christ had never more of the supporting presence of his Father, than when he had least of his comfortable presence; when Christ was in his grievous agony, and distress of body and mind, the Godhead did withdraw the comfortable presence from the manhood, and so far, and so far only was Christ forsaken. Though the

Matth. 27. 46.

John 10. 17.

the union was not dissolved, for there was a suspension of vision for the time, so as the humane nature did neither see or feel any present comfort from God: Now so far as the Godhead did withdraw its comfortable presence, so far our Saviour was forsaken and no further, that was but in part, and therefore he was but in part forsaken: God was really present with Christ, when in respect of his comfortable presence he was withdrawn from him. So here: The Husband may be in the house, and the Wife not know it; the Sun may shine, and I not see it; there may be fire in the Room, and I not feel it, so God may be really present with his People, when he is not sensibly present with his People. But

2. Proposition.

The second Proposition is this, That the favourable, signal, and eminent presence of God with his People, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, is only to be extended to his Covenant-people, to those that are his People by special grace. *Jer.* 32. 38. *And they shall be my People, and I will be their God.* Verse 40. *And I will make an everlasting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.* Verse 41. *Yea I will rejoyce over them, to do them good.* There are many precious promisses of the Divine presence, as I have already shewed, but they are all entailed upon Gods Covenant-people: We are all the People of God by Creation, both good and bad, sinners and saints, bond and free, rich and poor, high and low; and we are all the People of God by outward profession. All that do make an outward profession of God, and perform external worship to God; they are all the People of God in this sence; all the Carnal Israelites, are frequently called the People of God, as well as the spiritual Seed; thus *Cain* was one of Gods People as well as *Abel*, and *Esau* as well as *Jacob*. Now such as are only the People of God by creation, or by profession, these are strangers to God, these are enemies to God, and will he be favourably present with

Ephe. 2. 12.

Eph. 2. 1. Col. 2. 13

Gal. 3. 10.

Lev. 26. Deut. 28.

Job 21. 14, 15.

Psalm 7. 11.

Prov. 3. 32. cap. 15. 9.

these. Such as are only the People of God by creation and outward profession, they are dead in trespasses and sins, and can the living God take pleasure in being among the dead; such are under all the threatnings of the Law, and under all the curses of the Law, even to the uttermost extent of them, such are not one moment secure; the threatnings of God and the curses of the Law may light upon them, when in the house, when in the field, when waking when sleeping, when alone when in company, when rejoycing when lamenting, when sick when well, when boasting when despairing, when upon the Throne when upon a sick-bed; and will God grace these with his presence? surely no. Such say to God, *Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy wayes. What is the Almighty that we should serve him? and what profit should we have if we pray unto him?* Such queryings as this carry greatest contempt in them, and would lay the Almighty quite below the required duty, as if Almighty were but an empty Title, and will God ever honour such with his favourable presence, who bid him be packing, who reject his acquaintance, and are willing to be rid of his company? surely no. Such as are only his People by creation, and an outward profession, such are under the wrath and displeasure of God. [*God is angry with the wicked every day*;] not with a paternal, but with a judicial anger; even to hatred and abhorment. [*The wicked is an abomination to him, and he hates all workers of iniquity.*] And therefore to these he will never vouchsafe his signal presence, such may well expect that God will pour on them the fiercenes of that wrath and indignation, that they can neither decline nor withstand; such wrath is like the tempest and whirlewinds, that breakes down all before it. It is like burning fire, and devouring flames, that consumes all. This wrath will break down all the sinners arrogancies, and strangle all his vain hopes, and mar all his sensual joyes, and fill him with amazing distractions, and make him drunk with the

the wine of aſtoniſhment. And will God dwell with theſe? will he keep houſe with theſe? ſurely no. By theſe ſhort hints it is moſt evident, that the ſpecial preſence of God is entailed upon none out of Covenant; God loves to keep houſe with none but his Covenant-People; he will grace none with his gracious preſence, but thoſe that are his People by ſpecial grace. When wicked men are in great troubles, deep diſtreſſes, and moſt deadly dangers, God either leaves them, as he did *Saul*; or elſe purſues them to an utter over-throw, as he did *Pharaoh*; or elſe cuts them off by an inviſible hand, as he did *Sennacherib*'s mighty Hoſts, and proud King *Herod*; or elſe he leaves them to be their own executioners, as he did *Achitophel* and *Judas*, &c. But,

Joh. 14. 21, 23. 2 Cor. 1. 16, 17, 18.

1 Sam. 28. 15, 16, &c.

Ex 14. Iſa. 37. 36. Act. 12. 23.

The 3. Propoſition is this, that a ſincere Chriſtian may enjoy the preſence of the Lord in great troubles, deep diſtreſſes, and moſt deadly dangers, ſupporting and upholding of him, when he has not the preſence of God quickning, comforting, and joying of him, Pſal 37. 24. *Though he fall he ſhall not be utterly caſt down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.* [*Somech Jado, Upholding with his hand.*] There is not one moment wherein the Lord doth not uphold his People by the hand. The root [*Samach*] ſignifies, to ſuſtain and bear up, as the Nurſe or tender Mother does the little child, the weak child, the ſick child. Gods hand is ſtill under his, ſo that they can never fall below ſupporting grace. Pſal. 63. 8. *Thy right hand upholdeth me*; or, *Thy right hand underprops me.* God never did, nor never will want a hand to uphold, a hand to underprope his poor People in their greateſt troubles, and deepeſt diſtreſſes. Though the Saints have not alwayes the comforting preſence of God in their afflictions, yet they have always the ſupporting preſence of God in their afflictions, as Chriſt in his bitter and bloody Agony had much of the ſupporting preſence of his Father, when he had none of the comforting preſence of his Father with him; So the Saints in their deep diſtreſſes have many times much of the ſupporting preſence of

3 Propoſition. Pſal. 119. 117.

This is the upholding Pſalm.

Mat. 27. 46. My God, my God, &c.

Cant. 2. 6.

God; His left hand is under their heads, and his right hand doth embrace them, when in respect of his comforting presence, they may say with the weeping Prophet *The Comforter that should relieve my soul, is far from me.* When the love-sick Spouse was ready to faint, Christ circleth her with amiable embracements. *His left hand is under her head, and his right hand doth embrace her.* It is an allusion to their conjugal and mensal beds, on which the guests are so bestowed, that the first laid his left hand under the head of him that was next, and put him so in in his bosom, that with his other hand he might also, if he pleased, embrace him, which was a posture and sign of the greatest love, which the sick fainting Spouse here glories in. Christs two hands are testimonies and witnesses of his great power and might, who is able to preserve his People (though lame creeples) from falling, & also to lift them up again, when they are fallen never so low, and likewise to support and uphold them, that they shall never finally and utterly be cast down. When the hearts of the Saints are ready to faint and sink, then the Lord will employ all his power for their support, bearing them up as it were with both hands. He hath put his left hand under my head as a pillow to rest upon, and with his right hand he hath embraced me, as a loving Husband cherisheth his sick Wife, and doth her all the help he can. The best of Saints would fail, and faint in a day of trouble, if Christ did not put to both his hands to keep them up. In dayes of sorrow Gods People stands in need of a whole Christ to support them and uphold them. My head sinks, O my Beloved, put thy left hand softer than pillowes of roses, firmer than pillars of marable, under it; my heart faileth and dyeth, O let thy right hand embrace me. But,

Lam. 1. 16.

Eph. 3. 19.

4 Proposition.

The fourth propoition is this, that all Saints have not a like measure of the presence of the Lord in their troubles and tryals, in their sorrows and sufferings; some have more, and others have less of this presence of God in an evil day. 1. All Saints have not a like work

to

to do in an evil day. 2. All Saints have not alike temptations to withſtand in an evil day. 3. All Saints have not alike teſtimony to give in an evil day. 4. All Saints have not alike burdens to bear in an evil day. 5. All Saints have not alike things to ſuffer in an evil day. There are greater and there are leſſer troubles, diſtreſſes and dangers; and there are ordinary troubles, diſtreſſes and dangers; and there are extraordinary troubles, diſtreſſes and dangers: Now where the trouble, the diſtreſs, the danger is ordinary, there an ordinary preſence of God may ſuffice; but where the trouble, the diſtreſs, the danger is extraordinary, there the People of God ſhall have an extraordinary preſence of God with them, as you may ſee in the three Children, *Daniel*, the Apoſtles, the primitive Chriſtians, and the Book of Martyrs. Some troubles, diſtreſſes and dangers are but of a ſhort continuance, as *Athanaſius* ſaid of his baniſhment, *Nubecula eſt, citò tranſibit, It is but a little cloud, and will quickly be gone.* Others are of a longer continuance, and accordingly God ſuits his preſence. All Saints have not a like outward ſuccours, ſupplies, reliefes, comforts, *&c.* in their troubles, diſtreſſes and dangers; ſome have a ſhelter, a friend at hand, others have not; ſome have many friends, and others may cry out with him, O my friends, I have never a friend! ſome are ſurrounded with outward comforts, and others have not one, not one penny, not one friend, not one days work, *&c.* in a ſtorm ſome have good Harbours at hand, others are near the rocks, and in danger of being ſwallowed up in the ſands: ſo here, and accordingly God lets out more or leſs of his preſence among his People, ſome need more of his preſence than others do, and accordingly God diſpenceth it among his Saints. But,

Lam. 1. 12. cap. 4. 6. Dan. 9. 12, 13. 2 Cor. 11. 21. to the end. Heb. 11 25. to the end.

Dan. 3. Dan. 6.

The fift propoſition is this, that none of the Saints have at all times in all afflictions, diſtreſſes and dangers, the ſame meaſure and degree of the preſence of the Lord, but in one affliction they have more, in another leſs of the Divine preſence; in one affliction a Chriſtian may have

5 Propoſition. Some ſcores of Pſalms do evidence the truth of this propoſition.

have more of the enlightning presence of God than in another; and in another affliction a Christian may have more of the comforting presence of God, than in another; in this trouble a Christian may have more of the awakning presence of God, than in another, and in that trouble a Christian may have more of the sanctifying presence of God, than in another; and in this distress a Christian may have more of the supporting presence of God, than in that. No one Saint doth at all times, nor in all troubles need a like measure of the Divine presence. The primitive Christians and the Martyrs had sometimes more and sometimes less of the Divine presence with them, as their condition did require. God who is infinitly wise, does alwayes suit the measures and degrees of his gracious, favourable, signal presence to the necessities of his Saints. This is so clear and great a truth, that there are many thousands that can seal to it, from their own experience; and therefore need not enlarge upon it. But,

6 Proposition.

The sixth and the last proposition is this, that many precious Christians in their great troubles, deep distresses and most deadly dangers, may have this favourable, signal and eminent presence of God with them, and yet fear and doubt, yea peremptorily conclude that they have not this presence of God with them, *Psal.* 77.7,8,9,10. These sad interrogatories argues much fear & diffidence; but let me evidence the truth of this proposition by an induction of particulars; Thus, first: If Christ be not signally with you, why are you in your troubles so fearful of offending of him, and so careful and studious in pleasing of him? *Gen.* 39.9,10. *Psalm* 17.3,4,5. *Dan.* 3.16,17. *Dan.* 6.10,11,12,13. Secondly, If Christ be not signally with you, how comes it to pass that under all your troubles, deep distresses and most deadly dangers, you are still a justifying of God, a clearing of God, a speaking well of God, a giving a good report of God? *Psalm* 119.75. *Ezra* 9.13. *Neh.* 9.32.33. *Dan.* 9.12,14. Thirdly, if God be not signally with you, how come you

Jonah 2.4. Cant. 5.6,7,8,9,10. Psalm 88.

you to bear up so believingly, sweetly, stoutly, cheerfully and patiently under your troubles, deep distresses and greatest dangers, *Gen.* 49. 23, 24. 1 *Sam.* 30. 6. *Hab.* 3, 17, 18. *Acts* 5. 40, 41, 42. *Cap.* 16. 25, 26. *Acts* 27. 22. — 26. *Heb.* 10. 34. Fourthly, if Christ be not signally present with you, how comes it to pass that your thoughts, desires, hearts, thirstings and longings of soul, are so earnestly, so seriously, so frequently and so constantly carried out after more and more of Christ, and after more and more of the presence of Christ, and after more and more communion with Christ? *Psalm* 139. 17, 18. *Psalm* 63. 1, 8. *Psalm* 27. 4. *Psalm* 42. 1, 2, 3. *Exod.* 33. 13, 14, 15, 16. *Cant.* 1. 2. Fifthly, if Christ be not signally present with you, why are you so affected and afflicted with the dishonours and indignities, wrongs and injuries that are done to the Lord by others? *Psalm* 69. 9. *Psalm* 119. 53, 136, 158. *Jerem* 9. 1, 2. *Ezek.* 9. 4, 6. 2 *Pet.* 2. 7, 8. None but such that have the presence of the Lord signally with them, can seriously and sincerely lament over the high dishonours that are done to the Lord by others. Sixthly, if the Lord be not signally present with you, under all you troubles and deep distresses, why do you not cast off prayer and neglect hearing, and forsake the assembling of your selves together, and turn your backs upon the Table of the Lord, and take your leaves of closset-duties? But, seventhly, if the Lord be not signally present with you, under your great troubles and deep distresses, why don't you say, with *Pharaoh*, *Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?* And with the King of Israel, *Behold this evil is of the Lord, and why should I wait for the Lord any longer?* Or with that Noble Pagan, *If the Lord would make windows in Heaven, might this thing be?* Or with *Saul*, why don't you run to a Witch? Or with *Ahab*, why don't you sell your selves to work evil in the sight of the Lord? Or with *Ahaz*, trespass most when you are distressed most? Why don't you fret, and faint, and lye in the streets as a wild Bull, full of the fury of the Lord? Why don't you

Job 15. 4. Heb. 10. 25.

Exod. 5. 2. 2 Kings 6. 33. 2 Sam. 28. 15, 16 1 Kings 21. 20. 2 Chr. 28. 22. Isa. 51. 20. cap. 59 10, 11.

you grope for the wall, and stumble at noon-day, and rore all like Bears? But, eigthly, if the Lord be not signally present with you in your greatest troubles and deepest distresses, why do you with *Moses*, prefer suffering before sinning, and Christs reproaches before *Egypt's* treasures? Why do you scruple the sinning of your selves out of your sorrows? Why do you look upon sin as your greatest burden? Why are you so tender in the point of transgression, and so stout in resistance of the most pleasing temptation? But, ninthly, if the Lord be not signally with you in your great troubles and deep distresses, why do you set so high a price upon those that have much of the presence of God with them in their troubles and tryals? Why do you look upon them as more excellent than their Neighbours? yea as such worthies, of whom this world is no ways worthy? But, tenthly and lastly, if the Lord be not signally present with you, in your greatest troubles and deepest distresses, how comes it to pass that you are some what bettered, some what amended, some what reformed by the rod, by the afflictions, that have been and still are upon you; when the heart is more awakened, humbled and softned by the rod, when the will is more complyant with the will of God in doing or suffering, when the mind is more raised and spiritualized, when the conscience is more quick and tender, and when the life is more strict and circumspect: then we may safely and roundly conclude, that such persons do undoubtedly enjoy the signal and singular presence of God with them, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers. And thus I have laid down these six propositions, which if well weighed and improved, may many ways be of singular use to sincere Christians.

Heb. 11, 25, 26.

Psalm 38. 4. Gen. 39. 9, 10.

Psalm 16. 3, 4. Prov. 12. 26. Heb. 11. 38.

Psalm 119. 67, 71. Hosea 5. 14, 15. cap. 6. 1, 2. Hos. 2. 6, 7.

Eph. 5. 15.

We shall now come to the application or useful improvement of this great and seasonable Truth. Explication is the drawing of the Bow, but application is the hitting of the mark, the white. Is it so, that when the People of the Lord are in great troubles, deep distresses, and

and most deadly dangers, that then the Lord will be favourably, signally, and eminently present with them. Then let me briefly infer these ten things.

1 Inference.

First, that the Saints are a People of Christs special care. 2 Chron. 16. 9. *For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the whole Earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them, whose heart is perfect towards him.* The words contain, 1 The universality of Gods providence, his eyes walk the rounds, they run to and fro through the whole Earth, to defend and secure the sincere in heart. *Diana's* Temple was burnt down, when she was busied at *Alexander's* birth, and could not be at two places together: but God is present at all times, in all places, and among all persons, and therefore his Church, which is his Temple, can never suffer through his absence. The Egyptians had an Idol, called *Baal-Zephon*, which is by interpretation, *Dominus speculæ, Lord of the Watch-tower*, his office was, to fright such fugitive Jews as should offer to steal out of the Country: but when *Moses* and the People of Israel past that way, and pitched their camp there, this drowsy God was surely fast a sleep, for they all marched on their way without let or molestation. Whereas he that keepeth Israel *Neither slumbreth nor sleepeth*: he kept his Israel then, and he hath kept his Israel ever since; he made good his title then, and will make good his title still, he ever was and he ever will be watchful over his People for their good. 2 The efficacy of his providence, to shew himself strong: God fights with his eyes as well as his hands, he doth not only see his Peoples dangers, but saves them from dangers in the midst of dangers. When the Philosopher in a starry night was in danger of drowning, he cried out, Surely I shall not perish there are so many eyes of providence over me. King *Philip* said, He could sleep safely, because his friend *Antipater* watched for him. O how much more may the Saints sleep safely, who have always a God that keepes watch and ward about them. God is so strong a Tower that no cannon can pierce it, and he is

1 Cor. 3. 16. cap. 6. 19.

Exod. 14. 2.

Psalm 121. 3, 4, 5 Isa. 27. 3, 4.

Zach. 2. 5.

Psalm 3. 5, 6.

Prov. 18. 10.

is so high a Tower that no ladder can scale it, and it is so deep a Tower that no pioneer can undermine it; and therefore they must needs be safe and secure, who lodge within a Tower so impregnable, so inexpugnable. Now this is the case of all the Saints; the fatherly care and providence of God is still exercised for the good of his People. Deut. 32. 10. *He found him in a desart Land, and in the wast howling wilderness, he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.* Verse 11. *As an Eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings.* Verse 12. *So the Lord alone did lead him,* &c. The Eagle carries her young ones upon her wings (and not between her talons as other birds do) openly, safely, swiftly; and so did God his Israel, being choice and chary of them all the way, securing them also from their enemies, who could do them as little hure, as any can do the Eagles young, which cannot be shot but through the body of the old one. See at what a rate God speaks in that, *Isa.* 40. 27, 28. Observe how God comes on with his high interrogatories, *Hast thou not known?* What an ignorant People! *Hast thou not heard?* What a deaf People! what keep no intelligence with Heaven! 1 Pet. 5. 7. *Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.* I will now with you sing away care (said *John Careless*, Martyr, in his letter to Mr. *Philpot*) for now my soul is turned to her old rest again, and hath taken a sweet nap in Christs lap. I have cast my care upon the Lord, which careth for me, and will be careless according to my name. It was a strange speech of *Socrates*, a Heathen, Since God is so careful of you (saith he) what need you be careful for any thing your selves? Gods providence extendeth to all his Creatures; it's like the Sun of universal influence, but in a special manner it's operative for the safety of his Saints. In common dangers men take special care of their Jewels, and will not God, will not God take special care of his Jewels? surely yes. The Church of God is the house of God, and will not God take care of

Isa 49.16. c. 31.5. and cap. 32.1.2. See my Heavenly Cordial after a wasting Plague, much of the special care of God.

1 Cor. 3. 16. cap. 6. 19.

Exod. 14. 2.

Isa. 63. 4. 5. 6. cap. 59. 16.

Act. and Mon. fol. 1743.

Mal. 3. 17. Heb. 3. 6. 1 Pet. 2. 5.

of his house? surely that shall be well guarded, whatsoever be neglected; his house is every moment within the view of his favourable eye; and under the guard of his almighty arm, his thoughts and heart is much upon his house. God hath a peculiar and paternal care over his Saints, that distich of *Musculus* cometh in fitly.

Est Deus in cœlis qui providus omnia curat;
Credentes nunquam, deseruisse potest.

A God there is, whose Providence doth take
Care for his Saints, whom he will not forsake.

(*His eyes run*) implying the celerity and swiftness of God in hastning relief to his People, (*his eyes run through the whole Earth.*) implying the universality of help; there is not a Saint in any dark Corner of the world, under any straits or troubles, but God eyes him, and will take singular care of him; God will always suit his care, to his Peoples conditions, to which his eminent appearances for them in dayes of distress and trouble, give signal testimony. It is our work to cast care; it is Gods work to take care, let not us then by soul dividing thoughts take the Lords work out of his hand. But

Secondly, Will the Lord be signally present with his People, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses and most deadly dangers, then here you may see the true reason why the Saints are so comfortable, cheerful and joyful, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, it is because of that signal presence of God with them. It was this signal presence of God with the Martyrs, that made them rejoyce in the midst of their greatest sufferings, and that made them endure great sufferings, without any sensible feeling of their sufferings: As that young Child in *Josephus*, who when his flesh was pulled in pieces with pincers, by the command of *Antiochus*, said with a smiling countenance:

2. Inference.

Acts 5. 40, 41. Cap. 16. 25. Rom. 5. 3. 2 Cor. 7. 4. Cap. 12. 10. 1 Pet. 4 12, 13, 14 these Scriptures are already opened and improved.

Tyrant, thou losest time, where are those smarting pains with which thou threatnedst me? make me to shrink, and cry out if thou canst? And *Bainam*, an English Martyr, when the fire was flaming about him, said: You Papists talk of Miracles, behold here a Miracle, I feel no more pain than if I were in a bed of down; it is as sweet to me as a bed of Roses. Surely their strength was not the strength of stones, nor their flesh of brass, that they should not be sensible of so great sufferings; but this was only from that signal presence of God, that made them endure grievous pains without pain, and most exquisit torments without torment, and sore sufferings without feeling of their sufferings; and other choice souls there were, who though they were sensible of their sufferings, yet by the Divine presence they were filled with unspeakable courage, comfort and alacrity. *Laurence* when his body was roasted upon a burning Gridiron, cryed out, This side is roasted enough, turn the other. *Marcus* of *Arethusa*, a worthy Minister, when his body was cut and lanced, and anointed with honey, and hung up a loft in a Basket, to be stung to death by Wasps and Bees, he looking down cheerfully upon the the Spectators said, I am advanced, despising you that are below; and when we shall see poor, weak, feeble Creatures like our selves, defying their tormenters and their torments, conquering in the midst of their greatest sufferings, and rejoycing and triumphing in the midst of their fiery trials, singing in Prison, as *Paul* and *Silas* did; kissing the stake as *Henry Voes* did; clapping their hands when they were half consumed in the flames as *John Noyes* did; calling their execution day, their wedding day as Bishop *Ridley* did. We cannot but conclude that they had a singular presence of God with them, that made all their sufferings seem so easie and so light unto them. *Cæsar* cheered up his dropping Mariners in a storm, by minding them of his presence; but alass! alass! what was *Cæsar*'s presence to this Divine, this signal presence that the Saints have enjoyed in their greatest

Job 6. 12.

Heb. 11. 33. to 32.

greateſt troubles, and deepeſt diſtreſſes. But

Thirdly, Will the Lord be ſignally preſent with his People, in their greateſt troubles, deepeſt diſtreſſes, and moſt deadly dangers; then from hence you may ſee the weakneſs, madneſs, ſottiſhneſs, and folly of all ſuch as make oppoſition againſt the Saints; that affront, injure, and make head againſt thoſe that have the preſence of the great God in the midſt of them. O Sirs! *the weakneſs of God is ſtronger than Men.* What then is the ſtrength of God? 1 *Cor.* 10. 22. *Do we provoke the Lord to jealouſie? are we ſtronger than he?* Ah who knows the power of his anger! It is ſuch that none of the Potentates of the world, who ſet themſelves againſt the Saints, can avert or avoid, avoid or abide: That God is a mighty God, the Scriptures do abundantly evidence, and it appears alſo in the Epithet, that is added unto *El-*, which is *Gibbor*, importing that he is a God of prevailing might. By *Daniel* he is called *El-Elim, the mighty of mighties.* Now what folly and madneſs is it for Duſt and Aſhes, for crawling Worms, to make head againſt a mighty God; yea an Almighty God, who can curſe them, and cruſh them with a word of his mouth. 2 *Chron.* 32, 7. *Be ſtrong and couragious, be not afraid nor diſmayed for the King of Aſſyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him, for there be more with us than with him.* Verſe 8. *With him is an arm of fleſh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battels.* The King of Aſſyria was at that time the greateſt Monarch in the World, and the moſt formidable Enemy the Church had, yet the Divine preſence was a ſoveraign Antidote to expel all baſe ſlaviſh fears, that might ariſe in any of their hearts, concerning his greatneſs, power, or multitude. What was that great multitude that was with the King of Aſſyria, to that innumerable Company of Angels that was with *Hezekiah?* And what was an arm of fleſh to Gods ſupreme Soveraignity; that had this proud Prince in chaines, and that put a hook in his noſe, and a bridle in his lips, and cut off his great Army by the hand of an

3. Inference.

Iſa. 8. 9, 10. Cap. 27. 4. 1 Cor. 1. 25.

Pſalm 90. 11.

Geneſ. 49. 25. Num. 24. 4. 16. Ruth 1. 20, 21.

2 Kings 6. 17. Pſalm 34. 7, &c 91. 11. Heb. 12. 22. Cap. 1. ult. Iſa. 37. 29. 36, 37, 38.

an Angel in one night, and left him to fall by the sword of his own Sons. The Lord of Hosts can crush the greatest Armies in the world into Atomes at pleasure. When the Emperour *Heraclius* sent Ambassadours to *Chosroes*, King of Persia, to desire Peace of him; he received this threatning answer: I will not spare you, till I have made you curse your crucified God, and adore the Sun; he was afterwards (like another *Senacherib*) deposed and murthered by his own *Siroes*: When the Divine presence is armed against the great ones of the World, they must certainly fall. In *Diocletian's* time, under whom was the last and worst of the ten persecutions, though then Christian Religion was more desperately opposed than ever, yet such was the presence of God with his People in those times, that Religion prospered and prevailed more than ever; so that *Diocletian* himself observing that the more he sought to blot out the name of Christ, it became the more legible, and to block up the way of Christ it became the more passable; and what ever of Christ he thought to root out, it rooted the deeper and rose the higher, thereupon he resolved to engage himself no further, but retired to a private life: This is a good copy for the Persecutors of the day to write after. O Sirs! what folly and madness is it for weakness to engage against strength, the Creature against the Creator, an Arm of flesh against the Rock of Ages? What is the chaff to the whirl-wind, stubble and straw to the devouring flames? no more are all the Enemies of *Zion* to the great and glorious God, that is signally present with his People in their greatest troubles, and deepest distresses, *&c.* There was not one of those persecuting Emperours, that carried on the ten bloody Persecutions against the Saints, but came to miserable ends, yea Histories tell us of three and forty persecuting Emperours, that fell by the hand of revenging Justice; first or last the presence of God with his People, will undo all the Persecutors in the world. But

Dion. Cedren.

Ruffin.

Acts 5.38,39,40 Psalm 76. 12. Psalm 110. 5. 6. Rev. 6.14,15,15.

Fourth-

Fourthly, Will the Lord be signally present with his People, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, then from hence you may see the Lords singular love and admirable kindness to his People, in gracing them with his presence in their greatest troubles; that is a Friend indeed that will stick close to a man in the day of his troubles, as *Jobs* friends did stick close to him in the day of his troubles, and as *Jonathan* did stick close to *David* in his greatest dangers, and as the primitive Christians did stick close one to another, though with the hazard of their lives, and to the amazement of their Enemies: Behold (said they) how the Christians love one another, and stand by one another: The People of God in their greatest troubles are a People of his special love; when they are in distress he lyes them in his very bosom, and his banner over them is love. The love of God to his People is engraven upon the most afflictive dispensation they are under: when he smartly rebukes them, even then he dearly loves them. (*Hear ye the rod.*) Oh, the rod speaks love; many of the Saints have read much of the Lords love, written in letters of their own blood; they have read love in Prisons, and love in flames, and love in banishment, and love in the cruellest torments their Enemies could invent. When a Christians wounds are bleeding, then God comes in with a healing plaster; when a Christian is in a storm, then the presence of the Lord makes all calm and quiet within. The presence of the Lord with his People in their troubles and distresses, speaks out the reality of his love, the cordialness of his love, the greatness of his love, and the transcendency of his love. The truth and strength of Relations love one to another, doth best appear by their presence one with another, when either of them are in the Iron Furnace, or in bonds, or in great straits or wants, or deep distresses. The Parents shew most of their love to their sick and weak Children, by their daily presence with them; and the Husband shews most of his dear and tender

4. Inference.

Isa. 43. 2, 4.

Job 2. 11, 12, 13, 1 Sam. 20. 30, 31. 32, 33.

Cant. 2. 4.

Rev. 3. 19. Micha 6. 9.

Mal. 4. 2.

Matth. 8. 26.

der love, by keeping his Wife company when she is in greatest straits and dangers; so here. But

5. Inference. Fifthly, Will the Lord be signally present with his People, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, then this may serve to justifie the Saints, and to encourage the Saints to write after this fair copie that Christ has set them: O visit them, O stand by them, O stick close to them, in all their troubles, distresses and dangers; let the same mind be in you one towards another as is in Christ towards you all: Are there any *Jobs* upon the dunghil? visit them; are there any *Pauls* in chaines? find them out and be not ashamed of their chaines: 2 *Timoth.* 1, 16. *The Lord give mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain.* Verse 17. *But when he was in Rome, he sought me out diligently and found me.* Verse 18. *The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministred unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well?* [*He oft refreshed me.*] Greek, *Poured cold water upon me.* As that Angel did upon the wracked limbs of *Theodorus* the Martyr, mentioned by *Socrates* and *Ruffinus* in the dayes of *Julian* the Apostat; 'tis a Metaphor taken from those, who being almost overcome with heat are refreshed by cooling. (*And was not ashamed of my chain.*) Learned Antiquaries observe, that the Apostle at this time was not in prison with fetters, but in the custody of a Souldier, with whom he might go abroad, having a chain on his right arm, which was tyed to the Souldiers left arm: *Paul* at this time was not in prison, much less a close Prisoner, for then *Onesiphorus* needed not to have made any great search to find him; but was a Prisoner at large, going up and down with his Keeper to dispatch his affairs, and therefore he speaks not of chains in the plural number, but of a chain in the singular, with which he was tyed to the souldier that kept him. It no wayes becomes the Saints to be ashamed of the bonds or chains, that may be found upon

Phil. 2. 5.
Job 11, 12, 13.

ἀνέψυξε.

the

the Ambaſſadours of Chriſt in an evil day. The primitive Chriſtians were not aſhamed of the Martyrs chains, but owned them in their chains, and ſtood by them in their chains, and frequently viſited them in their chains, and freely and nobly relieved them, and refreſhed them in their chains: And will you, will you be aſhamed to viſit the Saints in bonds? *O let not this be told in Gath, nor publiſhed in the ſtreets of Askelon*, that the high-flown Profeſſors and Chriſtians of theſe times are aſhamed to own, relieve, and ſtand by the Saints in bonds. So *Matth.* 25. 36. *I was ſick and ye viſited me: I was in priſon and ye came unto me.* It is very remarkable, that the laſt definitive Sentence ſhall paſs upon men, according to thoſe acts of favour and kindneſs, that have been ſhewed to the Saints in their ſuffering ſtate; and that the Sentence of abſolution ſhall contain a manifeſtation of all their good works: In this great day Chriſt ſees no iniquity in his People, he objects nothing againſt them, and he only makes honourable mention of the good that has been done by them. O, Sirs, all the viſits you give to ſick Saints, and all the viſits you give to impriſoned Saints, Chriſt takes as viſits given to himſelf: ſuffering Saints and you are Brethren, and will you not viſit your own Brethren? ſuffering Saints and Chriſt are Brethren, and will you not viſit Chriſts Brethren? ſuffering Saints and you are Companions, and will you not viſit your own Companions? ſuffering Saints and you are travelling Heaven-wards, and will you not viſit your Fellow-travellers? ſuffering Saints and you are Fellow-citizens, and will you not viſit your Fellow-citizens? ſuffering Saints and you are Fellow ſouldiers, and will you not viſit your Fellow-ſouldiers? ſuffering Saints and you are Fellow-heirs, and will you not viſit your Fellow-heirs? O never be aſhamed of thoſe that Chriſt is not aſhamed of! O never fail to viſit thoſe whom Chriſt daily viſits in their ſuffering ſtate! O never turn your backs upon thoſe to whom Chriſt hath given the right hand of fellowſhip! O be not ſhy of them

2 Sam. 1. 20.

See Exo. 2. 11, 12. compared with Acts 7. 24. to 29. only remember the caſe was extraordinary and his call was extraordinary.

Matth. 25. 40. John 20 17. Pſalm 119. 63. 2 Cor. 8. 19.

Epheſ. 2. 19.

Phil. 2. 25.

Rom. 8. 17.

them, nor strange to them whom Christ lyes daily in his bosom! O be not unkind to them with whom one day you must live for ever. But

6. Inference.

Sixthly, Will the Lord be signally present with his People in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, then never give way to base slavish fears; there are as many *fear nots* in Scripture as there are *fears*; take a tast of some of them, *Hebr.* 13. 5. *He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* Verse 6. So that we may boldly say, *The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me:* This Text is taken out of *Psalm* 118. 6. *The Lord is on my side, I will not fear what man can do unto me.* Some read it by way of Interrogation; *What can man do unto me?* There is some difference in the Apostle's quoting the Text, betwixt the Hebrew and the Greek. The Hebrew thus reads it: *The Lord is with me,* or *for me*; or as our English hath translated it: *The Lord is on my side.* The Greek thus: *The Lord is my helper*; but the sence being the same with the Hebrew, the Apostle would not alter that translation: The alteration which is in the Greek, serves for an Exposition of the mind and meaning of the Psalmist; for God being with us, or for us, or on our side, presuppoſeth that he is our helper: So as there is no contradiction betwixt the Psalmist and the Apostle, but a clear interpretation of the Psalmists mind, and a choice instruction, thence ariseth, *viz.* That Gods signal presence with us, for us, or on our side, may abundantly satisfie us, and assure us, that he will afford all needful help and succour to us; the consideration of which should abundantly arm us against all base slavish fears: God is not present with his Saints in their troubles and distresses as a stranger, but as a Father, and therefore he cannot but take such special care of them, as to help them, as to succour them, and as to secure them from dangers in the midst of dangers, and therefore why should they be afraid? The Greek word βοηθὸς, that is translated *helper* in that *Hebr.* 13. 6. according to the

Psal. 51. 12, 13. Psalm 46. 1, 2, 3. Matt. 10, 28, &c.

The Earl of *Murray* speaking of Mr. *John Knox*, said, Here lies the body of him, who in his life time never feared the face of any man.

Is. 43. 2.

the notation of it, ſignifieth one that is ready to run at the cry of another. Now this notation implieth a willing readineſs, and a ready willingneſs in God to afford all ſuccour and relief to his People in their greateſt troubles, and deepeſt diſtreſſes; herein God ſhews himſelf like a tender Father, Mother, or Nurſe, who preſently runs when any of them hear the Child cry, or ſee danger near. *Iſai.* 8. 10. *God is with us.* Verſe 12. *Fear ye not their fear, nor be afraid.* The Divine preſence ſhould arm us againſt all baſe ſlaviſh fears of mens power, policy, wrath or rage: Kings and Princes compared with God, or with the ſignal preſence of God, are but as ſo many Graſhoppers skipping, and leaping up and down the field; and does it become Chriſtians that enjoy this Divine preſence to be afraid of Graſhoppers? *Iſa.* 41. 10. *Fear thou not for I am with thee: be not diſmayed for I am thy God; I will ſtrengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteouſneſs.* God expects that his ſignal preſence with us, ſhould arm us againſt all baſe fear and diſmayedneſs. *Pſalm* 23. 4. *Yea though I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, I will fear no evil for thou art with me.* The Divine preſence raiſed *David* above all his fears. *Pſalm* 27. 1. *The Lord is my light and my ſalvation, whom ſhall I fear? the Lord is the ſtrength of my life, of whom ſhall I be afraid?* Who is the Enemy that I ſhould be afraid of? where is the Enemy that I ſhould be afraid of? by what name or title is the Enemy dignified or diſtinguiſhed that I ſhould be afraid of? I look before me, and behind me, I look round about me, and I look at a diſtance from me, and I cannot ſee the man, the Devil, the Informer, that I ſhould fear or be afraid of, for God is with me. Where God is (ſaid King *Herod* in a ſpeech to his Army) there neither wants multitude nor fortitude, we may ſafely, readily, and cheerfully ſet the Divine preſence againſt all our Enemies in the world. When *Antigonus* his Admiral told him, that the Enemies number far exceeded his: But how many do ye

Iſa. 40. 22.

Joſephus lib. 15

set me against, said the King? Look about you and see who is with you. Ah Christians! Christians, look about you, look about you, and see who is signally present with you, and then be afraid if you can. But

7. Inference. Seventhly, Will the Lord be signally present with his People in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, then certainly there is no such great evil in troubles, distresses, sufferings, &c. as many conceive, fear, dream, think, judge; many men look upon troubles, afflictions, sufferings, in a multiplying glass, and then they cry out, there is a Lion in the way, a Lion in the streets: But, Sirs, the Lion is not always so fierce as he is painted, nor afflictions are not always so grievous as men apprehend; there are many who have been very fearful of Prisons, and have looked upon a Prison as a Hell, on this side Hell, who when they have been there for righteousnes sake, and the Gospels sake, have found [illegible]s to be Palaces, and the imaginary Hell to be a little Heaven unto them: Many fear afflictions and flee from afflictions as from Toads and Serpents, as from Enemies and Devils, and yet certainly there is no such great evil in affliction as they apprehend, for the Lord is signally present with his People in their greatest troubles and deepest distresses. Now what evil can there be in that condition, wherein a man enjoyes the Divine presence, that makes every bitter sweet, and every burden light, and that turns Winter nights into Summer dayes, &c. yea many times the Saints enjoy more of the singular presence of God in their afflictions, in their day of adversity, than ever they did in the day of prosperity, or in the day of their worldly glory. What Bride is afraid to meet her Bridegroom in a dark entry, or in a dirty lane, or in a narrow passage, or in a solitary wood; and why then should a Christian be afraid of this or that afflicted condition? who is sure to meet his blessed Bridegroom the Lord Jesus Christ in every estate, in every condition; who is sure to enjoy the presence of Christ with him in every turn or change that may pass upon

Prov. 22. 13. Cap. 26. 13.

upon him. How many Martyrs have ventured into the very flames to meet with Chriſt, and that have many other wayes made a ſacrifice of their deareſt lives, and all to meet with Chriſt. O the cruel mockings, the ſcourgings, the bonds, the impriſonments, the ſtoning, the ſawing aſunder that many of the Lords worthies have ventured upon, and all to meet with the preſence of the Lord; and why then ſhould any of you be afraid to enter into an afflicted condition, where you ſhall be ſure to meet the ſingular preſence of the Lord, that will certainly turn your afflicted condition into a comfortable condition to you? The great deſign of the Lord in afflicting of his People, is to meet with them, and to draw them into a nearer communion with himſelf; it is that they may ſee more of him than ever, and taſte more of him than ever, and enjoy more of him than ever, in order to which he ſubdues their corruptions by afflictions, and ſtrengthens their graces, and heightens their holineſs by all their troubles and trials. When ever he leads his Spouſe into a wilderneſs, it is that he may ſpeak friendly and comfortably to her, or that he may ſpeak to her heart, as the Hebrew runs. The great deſign of the Lord in bringing her into a wilderneſs, was that he might make ſuch diſcoveries of himſelf, of his love, and of his ſoveraign grace, as might chear up her heart, yea as might even make her heart leap and dance within her. Or as ſome ſence it, I will take her alone for the purpoſe, even into a ſolitary wilderneſs, where I may more freely impart my mind to her, that ſhe having her whole deſire ſhe may come up from the wilderneſs leaning upon her beloved, and ſo be brought into the bride-houſe with all ſolemnity. By all which it is moſt evident, that there is no ſuch evil in a wilderneſs eſtate, in an afflicted condition, as many imagin. But,

Heb. 11. 34.

Rev. 12. 11.
Heb. 11. 36, 37, 38

Iſa. 1. 25. c. 27. 8, 9
Heb. 12. 10, 11.
Hoſ. 2. 14.

Cant. 8. 5.

Eightly, will the Lord be ſignally preſent with his People in their greateſt troubles, deepeſt diſtreſſes, and moſt deadly dangers, then what a high encouragement ſhould this be to poor ſinners to ſtudy Chriſt, to acquaint

8 Inference.

quaint themſelves with Chriſt, to embrace Chriſt, to chuſe Chriſt, to cloſe with Chriſt, to ſubmit to Chriſt, and to make a reſignation of themſelves to Chriſt, and to ſecure their intereſt in Chriſt, that ſo they may enjoy his ſignal preſence in their greateſt troubles, deepeſt diſtreſſes, and moſt deadly dangers. O how many mercies are wrapt up in this mercy of enjoying the ſingular preſence of the Lord in all the troubles and tryals of this life. It is a mercy to have the preſence of a Friend, it is a greater to have the preſence of a near and dear relation with us, in a day of diſtreſs, in a day of darkneſs; But what a mercy is it then to have the preſence of the Lord with one in a dark day! That's excellent counſel that the wiſeſt Prince that ever ſwayed a ſcepter gives in that. Eccleſ. 11. 8. *Remember the dayes of darkneſs for they ſhall be many.* When light ſhall be turned into darkneſs, pleaſure into pain, delights into wearineſs, calms into ſtorms, Summer dayes into Winter nights, and the lightſome dayes of life into the dark dayes of old age and death. O now the ſingular preſence of the Lord with a man in theſe dayes of darkneſs will be a mercy more worth than ten thouſand worlds. To have a wife, a loving, a powerful, a faithful Friend to own us in the dark, to ſtand by us in the dark, to uphold us in the dark, to refreſh us in the dark, to encourage us in the dark, *&c.* is a very choice and ſingular mercy: O then what is it to have the preſence of the Lord with us in all thoſe dark dayes, that are to paſs over our heads! What *David* ſaid of the ſword of *Goliath* in another caſe [*There is none like that,*] that I may ſay of the Divine preſence with a man in the dark, *There is none like that.* The Pſalmiſt hit the mark the whit, when he ſaid, *My fleſh and my heart faileth, but God is the ſtrength of my heart and my portion for ever.* When *his fleſh*, that is his outward man, and when *his heart* his courage, that is his inward man failed him, then God was *the ſtrength of his heart* (or *the rock of his heart*, as the Hebrew runs,) at the very laſt gaſp God came in with his ſoveraign Cordial, and re-

Joh. 1. 12. Pſ. 112. 2, 3. Pſ. 2. 12. 2 Cor. 8. 5.

Pſalm 23. 4.

Pſalm 71. 20, 21.

1 Sam. 21. 8, 9.

Pſal. 73. 26. The Greek ſaith, The God of my heart, &c.

revived him and recovered him, and brought new life and ſtrength into him. When a Saint is at worſt, when he is at loweſt, when he is even overwhelmed with troubles and ſorrows, and when the dayes of darkneſs ſo multiply upon him that he ſeems paſt all hope of recovery, then the Divine preſence does moſt gloriouſly manifeſt it ſelf, and diſplay it ſelf, in ſupporting, ſtrengthning, comforting, and encouraging of him. In the *Rev.* 4. 6. you read, that the world is like a ſea of glaſs, [*I ſaw before the Throne a ſea of glaſs.*] The world is tranſitory, very frail and brittle as glaſs, and it is inſtable, tumultuous and troubleſome as the ſea. Here the world is ſhadowed out to us by a ſea of glaſs; and how can we ſtand on this ſea, how can we live on this ſea, how can we walk on this ſea, if Chriſt don't take us by the hand, and lead us, and ſupport us, and ſecure us? O Sirs, we can't uphold our ſelves on this ſea of glaſs, nor others can't uphold us on this ſea of glaſs, it is none but dear *Jeſus*, it is no preſence but his ſingular preſence, that can make us to ſtand or go on this ſea of glaſs. And if this world be a ſea of glaſs, oh what infinit cauſe have we to ſecure our intereſt in Chriſt, who alone can pilot us ſafe over this troubleſome, dangerous and tempeſtuous ſea! Oh that I could prevail with poor ſinners to take Chriſt into the ſhip of their ſouls, that ſo he may pilot them ſafe into the heavenly Harbour, the heavenly *Canaan*. No Pilot in Heaven or Earth can land you on the ſhore of a happy eternity from off this ſea of glaſs but *Jeſus*. When on this ſea of glaſs the winds blow high, ſtorms ariſe, and the bold waves beat into the ſhip, O then the ſinner cryes a Kingdom for a Chriſt, a world for a Pilot to ſave us from eternal drowning. Oh that before eternal ſtorms and tempeſts do beat upon poor ſinners, they would be prevailed with to cloſe with Chriſt, to accept of Chriſt, and to enter into a marriage-covenant, a marriage-union with Chriſt; that ſo they may enjoy his ſingular preſence with them, whilſt they are on this ſea of glaſs. There is no preſence ſo greatly deſirable, ſo abſolute-

Pſ. 11. 6. Pſ. 9. 17. Hoſ. 2. 19, 20. 2 Cor. 11. 2.

ly

ly necessary, & so exceeding sweet & comfortable as the presence of Christ, & therefore before all, & above all, secure this presence of Christ, by matching with the person of Christ; & then you will be safe & happy on a sea of glass.

9 Inference.

Ninthly, will the Lord be signally present with his People in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, then let me infer that unbelief, infidelity and despondency of spirit in an evil day, does very ill become the People of God. Is the Lord present with you in your greatest troubles, and will you flag in your faith, and be crest fallen in your courage, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall? what is this but to tell all the world, that there is more power in your troubles to sink and daunt you, than there is in the presence of the Lord, to support and encourage you, when a Christian is upon the very banks of the Red Sea, yet then the Divine presence should encourage him, *To stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord.* It would be good for timerous Christians in an evil day to dwell much upon the Prophets commission, Isa. 35. 3. [*Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees, Say to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, fear not.*] Ah, but how shall weak hands be strong, and a timorous heart cease to fear and faint? Why? *Behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence, he will come and save you*; he is on his way, he will be suddenly with you, yea he is already in the midst of you, and he will save you. If you cast but your eye upon precious promises, if you cast but your eye upon the new Covenant, which is Gods great store-house, there you will find all supports, all supplyes, all helps and all comforts laid up, and laid in for you, and therefore never despond, never faint, never be discouraged in an evil day, in a dark time. As *Joseph* had his store-houses to give a full supply to the *Egyptians* in time of famine, so dear *Jesus* (of whom *Joseph* was but a type) has his store-houses of mercy, of goodness, of power, of plenty, of bounty, out of which in the worst of

Isa. 35. 4.

Exod. 14. 13.

Isa. 41. 10. c. 43. 2 Heb. 13. 5. Jer. 32 40, 41. cap. 31, 31 to 38. Gen. 41. 35 36, 48, 49. Col. 1. 19. cap. 2. 3.

of times he is able to give his People a full ſupply, according to all their needs; and therefore be not diſcouraged, don't deſpond in a day of trouble. O my Friends, how often has the Lord hid you in the ſecret of his preſence from the pride of men, and kept you ſecretly in his pavilion from the ſtrife of tongues! And therefore be ſtrong, and lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees. When *David* was in a very great diſtreſs, he does not deſpond nor give way to unbelief, but encourages himſelf in the Lord his God. The Hebrew word is derived from *Chazack*, which notes, a laying hold on God with all his ſtrength, as men do when they are in danger of drowning, who will ſuffer any thing rather then let go their hold? When *David* was almoſt under water, when he was in danger of drowning, then by a hand of faith, he layes hold on the rock of ages, and encourages himſelf in the Lord his God. What heavenly gallantry of ſpirit did good *Nehemiah* ſhew from that Divine preſence that was with him in that great day of trouble and diſtreſs, when the remnant of the captivity were in great affliction and reproach, and the wall of *Jeruſalem* broken down, and the gates thereof burnt with fire! You know *Shemajah* adviſes him to take Sanctuary in the Temple, becauſe the enemy had deſigned to fall upon him by night and ſlay him, and cauſe the work to ceaſe: but *Nehemiah* having a ſignal preſence of God with him, gives this heroick and reſolute anſwer, *Should ſuch a man as I flee? and who is there, being as I am, would go into the Temple to ſave his life?* I will not go in. Should I flee into the Temple like a malefactor to take ſanctuary there? How would God be diſhonoured, Religion reproached, the People diſcouraged, the weak ſcandalized, and the wicked imboldned to inſult and triumph over me! ſaying, Is this the man that is called by God, and qualified by God for this work and ſervice? Is this the man that is countenanced and encouraged by the King to build the walls, and gates, and city of *Jeruſalem?* Is this the man, that is the chief Magiſtrate and Governour

Pſ.27.5. Pſ.31.20

Heb.12.12.

1 Sam.30.6.

Neh. 1. 3.

Cap.4.11. Cap.6.10.

Neh.2. 5. to the 10.

of the City? Is this the man, that is sent and set for the defence of the People, and that should encourage them in their work? O what a mouth of blasphemy would be opened should I make a base retreat into the Temple to save my life? This is a work that I will rather dye, than do. I have found the face of God, the presence of God, in bowing the heart of King *Artaxerxes*, to contribute his Royal aid, and commission me to the work; and in the bending of the hearts of the Elders of the Jews to own my authority, and to rise up as one man to build; and therefore I will rather dye upon the spot, than go into the Temple to save my life. Oh my Friends, it becomes not those that have the presence of God with them, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, to sink so low in their faith and confidence, as to cry out with the Prophets Servant, *Alas! Master, what shall we do?* Or with the Disciples when in a storm, *We perish*; Or with the whole house of Israel, *Our bones are dryed, and our hope is lost, and we are cut off for our parts*; Or with weeping *Jeremiah, My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord*; Or with *Sion, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.* Oh 'tis for a lamentation when Gods dearest Children shall bewray their infidelity by a fainting, sinking, discouraged spirit in an evil day. But,

2 Kings 6.15. Mat.8.25. Ez.37. 11. Lament.3.18. Isa.49.14.

10 Inference.

Tenthly and lastly, will the Lord be signally present with his People in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers; then let the People of the Lord be very thankful for his presence with them in their greatest troubles, *&c.* O Sirs, this Divine presence is a great mercy! It is a peculiar mercy, it is a distinguishing mercy, it is a big-bellied mercy, it is a mercy that hath many mercies in the womb of it, it is a mercy greatning mercy, it greatens all the mercies we do enjoy, it is a mercy sweetning mercy; it sweetens health, strength, riches, honours, trade, relations, liberty, *&c.* It is a soul mercy, a mercy that reaches the soul, that cheeres the soul, that lifts up the soul, that quiets the soul

Exod.33.13,14, 15, 16. 2 Tim.4. 22. Ps.16. ult.

ſoul, that ſatisfies the ſoul, & that will go to Heaven with the ſoul: And will you not be thankful for ſuch a mercy? will you be thankful for temporal mercies, and will you not be thankful for ſpiritual mercies? will you be thankful for left-handed mercies, and will you not be thankful for right-handed mercies? will you be thankful for the mercies of the foot-ſtool, and will you not be thankful for the mercies of the Throne? will you be thankful for the mercies of this lower world, and will you not be thankful for the mercies of the upper world? To enjoy the preſence of God when we moſt need it, is a mercy that deſerves perpetual praiſes. O it is infinit mercy not to be left alone in a day of trouble. 'Tis very uncomfortable to be left alone. [*Wo to him that is alone.*] If a man fall, and be left alone, who ſhall help him up? If a man be in danger and alone, how miſerable is his caſe! But this is the ſupport and comfort of a Chriſtian in all his diſtreſſes, that he is never left alone, but his God is with him when he is at the loweſt ebb: for God to afford us the preſence of our Friends in a day of trouble, is a very great mercy. But what is it then, to enjoy the preſence of God in a day of trouble? what is the preſence of a Friend, a Favorit in a day of diſtreſs, to the preſence of a Prince? yea, what is the preſence of an Angel, to the preſence of God in an evil day? To enjoy the preſence of God in an afflicted condition, is a more tranſcendent mercy, than to enjoy the preſence of twelve legions of Angels in an afflicted condition. The Divine preſence is the greateſt good in the world, 'tis life eternal, 'tis the boſom of God, the gate of glory, the beginning of Heaven, the ſuburbs of happineſs; and therefore be much in bleſſing of God in admiring of God for his preſence with you in a dark and trying day. There is no gall, no wormwood, no affliction, no judgment to that of Gods departing from a People, Jer. 6. 8. *Be thou inſtructed, O Jeruſalem, leſt my ſoul depart from thee, leſt I make thee deſolate, a Land not inhabited.* When God departs, nothing followeth but deſolation upon deſola-

Eph. 1. 3.

Pſ. 103. 1. 2, 3, 4.

Eccl. 4. 10, 11.

Heb. 13. 5. Pſ. 37. 24. Pſ. 31. 3. Pſ. 73. 24. Exod. 33. 2. 14, 15, 16.

Lam. 3. 19, 20.

tion; deſolation of perſons, deſolation of peace, of proſperity, of trade, and of all that is near and dear unto us, Hoſea 9. 12. *Though they bring up their children, yet will I bereave them, that there ſhall not be a man left; yea wo alſo to them when I depart from them.* All terrible threatnings are ſummed up in this [*Wo unto them, when I depart from them.*] Surely even wo to them, he puts a ſureneſs upon this [*Wo to them, when I depart from them.*] As if the Holy-Ghoſt ſhould ſay, What do I threaten this or the other evil? the great evil of all the riſe of all evils is Gods forſaking of them. Hell it ſelf, is nothing elſe but a ſeparation from Gods preſence, with the ill conſequents thereof, and were hell as full of tears as the ſea is full of water, yet all would not be ſufficient to bewail the loſs of that beatifical viſion. How miſerable was *Cain*, when caſt off by God! and *Saul*, when the Lord departed from him! it was a moſt dreadful ſpeech of *Saul* [*I am ſore diſtreſſed, for the Philiſtins make war againſt me, and God is departed from me,*] When God left the Iſraelites, though for a little while, the Holy-Ghoſt ſaith, they were naked, Exod. 32. 25. *How naked? Non veſte, ſed gratia & præſidio Dei; Not for want of rayment, or weapons of war, but for want of Gods preſence and protection.* When God departs from a People, that People lyes naked, that is, they lay open for all ſtorms, tempeſts & dangers. Now if it be the greateſt evil in the world to be ſhut out from the gracious preſence of Chriſt; then it muſt be the greateſt mercy in this world to enjoy the gracious preſence of God, in our great troubles and deſperate dangers: And therefore let all ſincere Chriſtians be much in thankfulneſs to the Lord, and in bleſſing and praiſing the Lord for his ſignal preſence with them, in their low and afflicted eſtate. O the light, the life, the love, the holyneſs, the peace, the grace, the comforts, the ſupports, that alwayes attends the gracious preſence of the Lord with his People, in their deep diſtreſſes, &c. therefore let the high praiſes of God for ever be in their mouths, who enjoy this ſignal preſence of God. The

Gen. 4. 1 Sam. 28. 15. 16. They that are out of Gods care are under his curſe.

Jun. in loc.

46 Pſalm is called by ſome *Luther's Pſalm*, that is a Pſalm that *Luther* was wont to call to his Friends to ſing, when any danger, trouble, or diſtreſs was near, when the clouds began to gather, Come (ſaith *Luther*) let us ſing the 46 Pſalm, and then let our enemies do their worſt. Obſerve the confidence and triumph of the Church in the face of the greateſt dangers, Verſe 1. *God is our refuge and ſtrength, a very preſent help in trouble.* Verſe 2. *Therefore will not we fear, though the Earth be removed, and though the Mountains be carried into the midſt of the Sea.* Verſe 3. *Though the waters thereof rore, and be troubled, though the Mountains ſhake with the ſwelling thereof, Selah.* Verſe 6. *Though the Heathen rage, and the Kingdoms were moved*, to remove and root out the Church with great force and fury. Now mark by the change of the Earth, and removing of the Mountains are often meant the greateſt alterations and concuſſions of States and Polities, *Hag.* 2. 22, 23. *Jer.* 51. 25. *Revel.* 6. 14. Now ſaith the Pſalmiſt, all theſe dreadful turns, changes, ſhakings, and concuſſions of States and Kingdoms ſhall never trouble us, nor daunt us, they ſhall never make us fret, faint or fear. Why, what's the ground? *The Lord of Hoſts is with us*, *The God of Jacob is our refuge*, Verſe 7. and ſo Verſe 11. The ſame words are repeated again, *God is not gone*, *God is not withdrawn, God is not departed from us*, O no. [*The Lord of Hoſts is is with us, The Lord of Hoſts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge, the God of Jacob is our refuge,*] And therefore we are Divinely fearleſs, & Divinely careleſs, though Hell and Earth ſhould combine againſt us, yet we will bear up, and be bold to believe that all ſhall go well with us, for God is in the midſt of us, *The Lord of Hoſts is with us*; Even the Lord, who commandeth far other Hoſts and Armies than the enemy hath any. *The God of Jacob is our refuge*, Heb. *Our high Tower.* God is a Tower, ſo high, ſo ſtrong, ſo inacceſſible, ſo invincible, that all our enemies, yea all the powers of darkneſs, can never hurt, reach, ſtorm, or take; and therefore we, that are ſheltered

We may tranſlate it, He is found, that is, God is preſent at hand, as Gen. 19. 15. God is a preſent help. The Hebrew word in a ſecondary ſence, ſignifies To be ſufficient, Num. 11. 22. A ſufficient help you need no other.

ſheltered in this high Tower, may well caſt the gantlet to our proudeſt, ſtrongeſt, and ſubtleſt enemies. And let thus much ſuffice for the inferences.

2 Uſe.

The next uſe is a uſe of exhortation, to exhort all the People of God, ſo to order and demean themſelves as to keep the Divine preſence, as to keep the ſignal, the ſingular preſence of God with them in their greateſt troubles, deepeſt diſtreſſes, and moſt deadly dangers. Now that this may ſtick in power upon your ſouls, conſider ſeriouſly of theſe following motives.

1 Motive.

Firſt, the ſignal preſence of God with his People puts the greateſt honour, dignity and glory upon a People, imaginable. There are many titles of honour amongſt men, but this above all is the truly honourable title, that we have God ſo near unto us, Deut. 4.7. *What Nation is there ſo great, who hath God ſo nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is to us?* Whiles he vouchſafed his preſence amongſt them, how honourable, how renowned were they all the world over! But when he departed from them, they became the ſcorn and contempt of all Nations. It may be ſaid of ſome men, they have large Eſtates, but not the preſence of God with them, they are highly honoured and dignified in the world, but no preſence of God with them, they have great trades and vaſt riches, but no preſence of God with them, they are nobly related, but no preſence of God with them, they have ſingular parts and natural accompliſhments, but no preſence of God with them; the want of the Divine preſence gives a daſh caſts a blot upon all their grandures & worldly glory, and like Coprice turnes all their wine (be it never ſo rich) into ink and blackneſs. What a deal of honour and glory did the preſence of God caſt upon *Joſeph* in priſon! and upon *Daniel* in the Den! and upon the three Children in the fiery Furnace! and upon *David*, when a perſecuting *Saul* could cry out, *Thou art more righteous than I!* and upon *John*, when a bloody *Herod* feared him, and obſerved him! and upon *Paul*, when a tyrannical *Felix* trembled before him, as if *Paul* had been the

Vide Iſa. 43.2,4. Jer.13.11. Ezek. ult. and ult.

Gen.39.19,20.

1 Sam.24.17. Mar.6.20. Acts 24.25.

the Judge and *Felix* the priſoner at the bar! Some write of the Chryſtal, that what ſtone ſo ever it toucheth, it puts a luſtre and lovelineſs upon it: The preſence of God puts the greateſt luſtre, beauty, glory and lovelineſs that can be put upon a perſon. Now becauſe the witneſs of an Adverſary is a double teſtimony, let *Baalam* (who as ſome write of a Toad, had a Pearl in his head, though his heart was naught, very naught, ſtark naught) give in his evidence. *How goodly are thy Tents, O Jacob, and thy Tabernacles, O Iſrael?* He ſpeaks both by way of interrogation, and admiration; their Tents are ſo comely and their Tabernacles ſo lovely, that their grand enemy was affected & raviſhed with them. But whence is it that Iſrael is ſo formidable and terrible in his eye? how comes this about, that he who came to fight againſt them, thinks them beyond all compare, nay doth himſelf admire their poſtures and order, their great glory & brave gallantry, why all is from the preſence of their Lord-General with them? The Lord their God is with them, the ſhout of a King is amongſt them. It is the higheſt honour, renown and dignity of a People to have God in the midſt of them, to have God near unto them. Thus *Moſes* ſets out the honour and dignity of the Jews, Deut. 26. 18. *The Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar People*, Verſe 19. *To make thee high, above all Nations which he hath made, in praiſe, and in name, and in honour.* When God reckons up the dignities of his People, this is the main the top of all, Pſalm 87. 5. *And of Sion it ſhall be ſaid, this and that man was born in her, and the Higheſt himſelf ſhall eſtabliſh her.* If you would keep your honour and dignity, keep the preſence of God in the midſt of you; when God is departed from Iſrael, then you may write *Ichabod* upon Iſrael, *The glory is departed from Iſrael.* But,

Num. 24. 5.

Num. 23. 21.

1 Sam. 4. 21, 22.

Secondly, To move you ſo to order demean, and carry your ſelves as you may enjoy the gracious preſence of God with you, in your greateſt troubles, and deepeſt diſtreſſes, conſider that nothing can make up the want

2 Motive.

want of this signal presence of God; it is not the presence of Friends, of Relations, of Ministers, of Ordinances, of outward comforts, that can make up the want of this presence; it is not candle-light, or torch-light, or star-light, nor moon-light, that can make up the light of the Sun: When the Sun is set in a cloud all the world cannot make it day, and when the presence of God is withdrawn, nothing can make up that dismal loss: *Thou didst hide thy face and I was troubled*; that is thou didst suspend the actual influence and communication of thy grace and favour (the Chaldee calleth it *Shechinah, the Divine presence*) and I was all-amort. It was not his Crown, his Kingdom, his Riches, his Dignities, his Royal attendance, &c. that could make up the loss of the face of God, neither is it the presence of an Angel that can make up the want of the presence of God. *Exod.* 33. 2. *And I will send an Angel before thee.* God here promiseth *Moses* that he would send an Angel before them, but with all adds that he would not go up himself in the midst of them: but such a Guide, such a Guardian, such a Nurse, such a Companion, such a Captain General would not satisfie *Moses*. Verse 14. *And he said, my presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.* Verse 15. *And he said unto him, if thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.* Nothing would satisfie *Moses* below the presence of God, because he knew that they were as good never move a foot further, as to go on without Gods favourable presence. God engages himself that he will drive out the *Canaanite*, the *Amorite*, and the *Hittite*, and the *Perizite*, and the *Hivite*, and the *Jebusite* out of the Land. *O but if thy presence go not with me, carry us up not hence.* I will bring the necks of all thy proud, stout, strong, and subtle Enemies under thy feet: O but *if thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.* I, but *I will bring thee to a land flowing with milk and honey: I will make thee to ride on the high places of the earth, and I will make thee to suck honey out of the rock, and oyl out of the flinty rock*;

Psalm 30. 6, 7.

Exod. 33. 3.

Verse 2.

Deut. 32. 13, 14, 15, 16.

and

and thou ſhalt drink the pure blood of the grape: O but *if thy preſence go not with me, carry us not up hence.* I will bring thee to the Paradice of the world, to a place of pleaſure and delight, to *Canaan* a Type of Heaven: O but *if thy preſence go not with me, carry us not up hence.* O Lord, if I might have my wiſh, my deſire, my choice, I had infinitely rather to live in a barren, howling wilderneſs with thy preſence, than in *Canaan* without it. It is a mercy to have an Angel to Guard us, it is a mercy to have our Enemies ſprawling under our feet, it is a mercy to be brought into a pleaſant Land: O but *if thy preſence go not with me, carry us not up hence.* Lord nothing will pleaſe us, nothing will profit us, nothing will ſecure us, nothing will ſatisfie us without thy preſence; and therefore *if thy preſence go not with us, carry us not up hence.* I have read of the *Tyrians*, that they bound their Gods with chains, that they might not in their greateſt need paſs over to the Enemy; and among the reſt they chained and nailed their God *Apollo* to a poſt, that they might be ſure to keep their Idol, becauſe they thought their ſafety was in it. I am ſure our ſafety, our comfort, our all lyes in the ſignal preſence of God with us; and therefore let us by Faith and Prayer chain God to us, if we let him go, a thouſand worlds cannot make up his abſence. I ſuppoſe you have heard of the *Palladium* of the Heathens in *Troy*, they imagined that ſo long as that Idol was kept ſafe, they were inconquerable, all the ſtrength and power of *Greece* were never able to prevail againſt them; wherefore the *Greeians* ſought by all the means they could to get it from them. O my Friends, ſo long as you keep the preſence of God with you, I am ſure you are unconquerable; but if God withdraw his preſence, the weakeſt Enemy will be too hard for you, yea wounded men will prevail over you. *Jer.* 37. 10. *For though ye had ſmitten the whole army of the Chaldeans that fight againſt you, and there remained but wounded men among them, yet ſhould they riſe up and burn this City with fire.* The Buſh, which was a Type

of the Church, consumed not while it burned with fire, because God was in the midst of it. O do but keep God in the midst of you, and nothing shall hurt you, nothing shall burn you; but if God depart, nothing can secure you, nor nothing can make up his withdrawing from you. But

3. Motive: Thirdly, To move you so to order, demean and carry your selves as that you may enjoy the gracious presence of God with you, in the greatest troubles, and deepest distresses, consider, that if you do not labour to demean, order and carry your selves so, as that you may enjoy the favourable, signal, and eminent presence of God with you, in your greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, you have high reason to question, whether ever you have really enjoyed this favourable, this signal presence of God with you or no; for there are alwayes four things to be found in him that has really tasted, and in good earnest experienced the sweet, the life, the power, the vertue that is in the favourable signal presence of God: 1. Such a person sets the highest price and value imaginable upon it, he prizes it above all the honours, riches, dignities, delights, comforts and contents of this world. *Psalm* 4. 6, 7. Yea he prizes it above life it self. *Psalm* 63. 3. *Thy loving kindness is better than life*; the Hebrew is plural *Chajim lives*: The loving kindness of God, the presence of God in a wilderness is better than lives, than many lives, than all lives with the appurtenances: There is a greater excellency in the favour of God, in the presence of God, than in all lives put together: There have been many Persons that have been weary of their lives, but there never was any man that has been weary of the favour of God, of the presence of God. 2. Such a Person keeps up in his soul an humble fear of losing of it. The Divine presence is a Jewel more worth than all the world, and he that has experienced the sweetness of it, had rather lose all he has in this world than lose it. I have read of a Religious woman, that having born nine Children,

1 Kings 19. 4. Job 7. 15. Jona 4. 8. Prov. 28. 14.

pro-

professed that she had rather endure all the pains of those nine Travels at once, than endure the misery of the loss of Gods presence. 3. Such a person keeps up in his soul a diligent care to maintain this presence, his head, his heart is still a contriving how he may keep his God with him. *Jerem.* 14. 4. *Why shouldest thou be as a man astonied, as a mighty man that cannot save? yet thou, O Lord are in the midst of us, and we are called by thy Name, leave us not.* This Person had rather that his deerest Friends should leave him, that his neerest Relations should leave him; yea that all the world should leave him than that his God should leave him: The daily, yea the hourly language of his soul is, Lord leave me not, though all the world should leave me, yet don't thou leave me. 4. Such a Person will do all he can, that all under his care and charge may partake of this signal presence of God, he will do his utmost that Children, Yoak-fellow, Kindred, Servants may tast the sweetness of the Divine presence. When *Sampson* had found honey in the Carcass of the Lion, he did not only eat himself, but he gave of the honey to his Father and Mother, and they did eat also; of all sweets the presence of God is the greatest sweet, and when ever a poor soul comes to tast of this heavenly honey, he will do his best that all others (especially those that are near and dear to him) may tast of the same honey. But

John 1. 40. to the end. Cap. 4. 28. to 43. Acts 10. 24. to 36. Judges 14. 8, 9.

Fourthly, To move you so to order, demean and carry your selves as that you may enjoy the gracious presence of God with you, in your greatest troubles, and deepest distresses, consider the excellent properties, or qualities of this favourable, this signal presence of God with his People, this I can but hint at because I must hasten all I can to a close. 1. It is the best presence, *Ps.* 63. 3. 'tis better than the presence of Friends, of Relations, of Saints, of Angels, &c. 2. 'Tis the greatest presence, 'tis the presence of the great King, 'tis the presence of the King of Kings, & Lord of Lords, 'tis the presence not only of a mighty, but of an Almighty God. 3. It is the happiest presence, 'tis a presence

4. Motive.

1 Kings 8. 27. Revel. 17. 14. Cap. 19. 16. Numb. 24. 4. 16. Ruth. 1. 20. 24.

Psalm 144. 15. 1 Kings 10. 8. Deut. 33. 29. Prov. 3. 18.

that makes a man really happy, presently happy, totally happy, eminently happy, and eternally happy; he can never be truly happy that wants this presence, he can never be truly miserable that enjoyes this presence; true happiness is too great a thing to be found in any thing below this favourable, this signal presence of God; he that enjoyes this presence enjoyes all, he that wants this presence enjoyes nothing at all, he that wants this presence may write nothing or nought, upon his honours, riches, pleasures, dignities, offices, Relations, Friends, &c. All a man has are but ciphers without a figure, if he be not blest with this Divine presence: This Divine presence was *Jacob*'s enough, yea *Jacob*'s *all*, Li-col. Genes. 33. 11. *I have all*, *Esau had much*, *Li-zah*, *I have much my brother*. Verse 9. But *Jacob had all*. *Habet omnia*, *qui habet habentem omnia*, *He hath all*, *who hath him that is all in all*. *Omne bonum in summo bono*, *All good is in the chiefest good*: Secure this Divine presence, and you secure all. 4. It is the most desirable presence, consult these Scriptures in the margin. *Job* 23. 3. *O that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat.* Exod. 33. 15. *If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.* Verse 16. *For wherein shall it be known here, that I and my people have found grace in thy sight, is it not in that thou goest with us?* Cant. 3. 1. *By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth, I sought him, but I found him not.* The presence of bad men is never desirable; the presence of good men is not alwayes desirable, for there are cases wherein their presence may be a burden to us, as *Job* and others have experienced. *Job* 16. 2. *Miserable Comforters are ye all.* Cap. 19. 2. *How long will you vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words?* But the presence of the Lord is very desirable, most desirable, and alwayes desirable, and the more any man has of this Divine presence, the more his heart will be inflamed after more and more of it. A sound sincere Christian can never have enough power against sin, nor never enough strength against temptation, nor never enough weanedness,

Amos 6. 13.

Augustine.

Colos. 3. 11.

Psalm 42. 1, 2. Psalm 63. 1, 2, 8. Psalm 27. 4. Genes. 28. 20. Psalm 84.

Jer. 9. 1, 2. Job 16. 1, 2, 3, 4. Cap. 19. 3, 4, 5.

ness from this World, nor never enough ripeness for Heaven, nor never enough of the presence of the Lord; enough of the Divine presence, he may have to quiet him, and cheer him, and encourage him, but whil'st he is out of Heaven, he can never have enough of the Divine presence to satisfy him, so as not to cry out, Lord more of thy presence, O a little more of thy presence! 5. 'Tis the most joyful, refreshing, and delightful presence, *Psalm* 16. *ult.* *Acts* 5. 40, 41. *Cap.* 16. 25. This *Vincentius*, and many thousand Martyrs, and suffering Christians have experienced in all the Ages of the world, but of this before. 6. 'Tis a peculiar and distinguishing presence; this favourable signal presence of God is a choice Jewel, that he hangs in no breasts, a Bracelet that he puts upon no arms, a Crown that he sets upon no heads, but such whom he loves with a peculiar love, with an everlasting love. The general presence of God extends and reaches to all Sinners and Saints, Angels and Devils, to all, both in that upper and this lower world; But this favourable signal presence of God, is peculiar to those that are the purchase of Christs blood, and the travail of his soul; 7. 'Tis an inflamming presence: Oh, how does it, 1. Inflame the heart to duty? *Psalm* 63. 1, 2, 3. 2. How does it inflame the heart against sin? *Job* 31. 4, 5, 6, 7. *Genes.* 39. 9, 10. *Rom.* 8. 10. 3. To long for the Majestical and glorious presence of God in Heaven? *Cant.* 8. *ult.* *Luke* 2. 28, 29, 30. 2 *Cor.* 5. 8. *Phil.* 1. 23, *Rev.* 22: 20. 4. How does it inflame their love to the Lord, his wayes, his worship, his interest, his glory? *Cant.* 1. 3, 4. *Cant.* 2. 3, 4, 5, 6. *Cap.* 8. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7. 5. It inflames against temptations, 10. 11. It was this Divine presence that did steel and strengthen *Basil*, *Luther*, and a world of others against the worst of temptations. 6. It inflames the hearts of the Saints into great freeness, readiness, and willingness to suffer many things, to suffer great things, to suffer any thing for Christ, his Gospel, his interest, &c. O how did this Divine presence make many Martyrs hasten to the flames! &c. 8. 'Tis a soul quieting,

Prov. 30. 15, 16.

Isa. 60. 1, 2. Psalm 46. 7.

Exod. 33 16.

Jer 31. 3. Joh. 13. 1. Psalm 139. 7, 8, 9, 10.

1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. Isa 53. 11. Ruth 1. 4. to 18.

Heb. 11.

quieting, a soul silencing, and a soul stilling presence, *Psalm* 3. 5. *Psalm* 4. 8. *Cant.* 2. 3. *Cap.* 3. 4, 5. When Friends can't quiet us, when Relations can't quiet us, when Ministers can't quiet us, when Duties can't quiet us, when Ordinances can't quiet us, when outward comforts can't quiet us, yet then this Divine presence will quiet us; when Babies and Rattles can't quiet the Child, yet then the breasts can, so here. 9. This Divine presence is a sweetning presence, 1. It sweetens all duties and services, publick and private, ordinary and extraordinary. 2. It sweetens all personal afflictions, and tryals. 3. It sweetens all our sufferings for righteousnes sake. 4. It sweetens all Gospel Ordinances, *Exod.* 20. 24. 5. It sweetens all a mans outward mercies and blessings, it sweetens health, strength, riches, trade, *&c.* 6. It sweetens all interchangeable providences, here providence smiles, and there it frownes, here it lifts up, and there it casts down; this providence is sweet, and that is bitter, this providence kills, and that providence makes a live. O but this Divine presence sweetens every providence. 7. It sweetens all other presences, it sweetens the presence of Friends, it sweetens the presence of Relations, it sweetens the presence of strangers, it sweetens all Civil Societies, it sweetens all Religious Societies. 8. It sweetens the thoughts of death, the arrests of death, it turns the King of terrours into the King of desires, *Job* 14. 5, 14. *Cap.* 30. 23. *Job* 17. 13, 14. How does *Job* court the worms, as if he were of a family with them, and neare of kin to them! How does he look upon the grave as his bed, and makes no more to die than to go to bed. It was this Divine presence that made the Martyrs as willing to die, as to dine. But,

5 Motive. Fifthly, To move you so to order demean and carry your selves, as that you may enjoy the gracious presence of God with you, in your greatest troubles and deepest distresses, consider that in great troubles, deep distresses and most deadly dangers, you will most need the favourable signal presence of God with you. We alwayes

stand

ſtand in need of the Divine preſence, but never ſo much as when we are under great troubles and deep diſtreſſes; For, 1. In dayes of trouble and diſtreſs mens affections are moſt apt to be greatly diſordered, and their hearts diſcompoſed, as you ſee in *Job* and *Jonah*. 2. Now their fears, doubts, and diſputes are apt to riſe higheſt; when the wind riſes high and the ſea roares, men are moſt apt to be afraid. 3. Now Satan commonly is buſieſt, Satan loves to fiſh in troubled waters; when the hand of God is heavieſt upon us, then Satan will ſhoot his moſt deadly darts at us. The ſons of *Jacob* fell upon the *Shechemites* when they were ſore; and *Amaleck* fell upon Gods Iſrael and ſmote them, when they were weak, and feeble, and faint and weary; and Satan falls foul upon Chriſt, when he was in the wilderneſs, and when he had faſted forty dayes and forty nights, and was a hungry; And as he dealt with the head, ſo he ſtill deales with the members. 4. Now unbelief is moſt turbulent, ſtrong, and mighty in operation, as you may ſee in the Spies, *We be not able to go up againſt the people, for they are ſtronger than we. The Land through which we have gone to ſearch it, is a Land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof, and all the people that we ſaw in it are men of great ſtature; And there we ſaw the Giants, the Sons of Anak, which come of the Giants, and we were in our own ſight as Graſhoppers, and ſo we were in their ſight.* So 2 Kings 6. 33. *This evil is of the Lord, what ſhould I wait for the Lord any longer?* So *David* Pſal. 116. 11. *I ſaid in my haſt all men are lyars*, the Prophets have all deceived me, and *Samuel* has deluded me, they have told me of a Kingdom, a Crown, but I ſhall never wear the one, nor poſſeſs the other. So 1 Sam. 27. 1. *I ſhall now periſh one day by the hand of Saul*; Thus his fear is got above his faith, and his ſoul wherried about with unbelief, to the ſcandal of the weak, and the ſcorn of the wicked, beſides his own particular diſadvantage. 5. Now fainting fits will be moſt ſtrengthned, increaſed, and multiplyed. Now fainting fits like *Jobs* Meſſengers, or like the rolling waves, will come thick

Job 3. Jonah 4.

Jonah 2. 2. to 7.

Job 2. 9. Jam. 1. 12.

Gen. 34. 25. Deu 25. 17, 18, 19.

Mat. 4. 1. to 11.

Num. 13. 31, 32.

Verſe 33.

Vide 2 Kin. 7. 1, 2. 19, 20.

thick one upon another, *Prov.* 24. 10. *Job* 4. 5. *Lam.* 1. 12, 13. 6. Now conſcience will be moſt ſtartled & diſquieted, *Gen.* 42. 21. *cap.* 50. 15. 1 *Kings* 17. 18. Great troubles and deep diſtreſſes are many times like ſtrong phyſick, which ſtirs the humours and makes the Patient ſick, very ſick, yea heart ſick. Conſcience commonly never reades the ſoul ſuch ſad and ſerious lectures as when the Rod lyes heavieſt upon the back. By all which you ſee, what high cauſe the People of God have ſo to order, demean and carry themſelves, as that they may find the gracious preſence of God with them in their greateſt troubles, and deepeſt diſtreſſes, for then they will certainly need moſt of the Divine preſence. But,

6 Motive. Sixthly, To move you ſo to order, demean and carry your ſelves, as that you may enjoy the gracious preſence of God with you in your greateſt troubles and deepeſt diſtreſſes, conſider, this Divine preſence will make you Divinely fearleſs in the midſt of your greateſt troubles & deepeſt diſtreſſes, Pſal. 23. 4. *Though I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy ſtaff they comfort me.* Pſalm 46. 2. *We will not fear though the Earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midſt of the Sea.* Verſe 3. *Though the waters thereof rore*, &c. Why? *God is in the midſt of her, ſhe ſhall not be moved, God ſhall help her, and that right early.* Verſe 5. *The Lord of Hoſts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge, Selah.* Verſ. 7. Num. 14. 9. *Neither fear ye the people, for they are bread for us, their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us, fear them not.* Deut. 7. 21. *Thou ſhalt not be affrighted at them, for the Lord thy God is among you, a mighty God and terrible.* So *Heb.* 13. 5. *I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee.* Verſe 6. *I will not fear what man ſhall do unto me.* There is no ſuch way to keep down all baſe ſlaviſh fears of men, as to keep up the preſence of God in the midſt of you; you will not fear the power of men, nor the policy of men, nor the threats of men, nor the wrath of men, if you do but enjoy this gra-

gracious, this ſignal preſence of God that is under our preſent conſideration, mens fears are never ſo rampant as when God withdraws his preſence from them. 1 *Sam.* 28. 15, 20. But,

Seventhly, To move you ſo to order, demean, and carry your ſelves, as that you may enjoy the gracious preſence of God with you, in your greateſt troubles, and deepeſt diſtreſſes, conſider, that there is in God a very great unwillingneſs to withdraw his preſence from his People, when they are in great troubles and deep diſtreſſes, Ezek. 8. 6. *Son of man, ſeeſt thou what they do? even the great abominations that the houſe of Iſrael committeth here, that I ſhould go far off from my Sanctuary.* Of all ſins the ſin of Idolatry drives God fartheſt off from his Sanctuary; when God goes off from a People, he goes not off raſhly, he goes not off ſuddenly, but he goes off gradually, he removes not at once, but by degrees, now a ſtep, and then a ſtep, as *Lot* did when he lingred in *Sodom*, *Lot* was not more loth to depart out of *Sodom*, than God is loth to leave his People, he goes firſt to the threſhold, Ezek. 9. 3. *And the glory of the God of Iſrael was gone up from the Cherub whereupon he was, to the threſhold of the houſe*, Then over the threſhold. Cap. 10. 4. *Then the glory of the Lord went up from the Cherub, and ſtood over the threſhold of the houſe.* Here is a ſecond ſtep, this is the ſecond time of reſting before God departs. The Lord had his ordinary dwelling-place in the Holy of Holyes: Now Gods firſt remove was from the moſt Holy place, his ſecond remove was from the Holy place, his third remove was higher towards Heaven, Verſe 19. *And the Cherubims lift up their wings, and mounted up from the Earth in my ſight, then to the door of the Eaſt gate* (or *foremoſt gate*) *of the Lords houſe.* To note Gods total remove from his houſe. Then to the midſt of the City, Ezek. 11. 23. *And the glory of the Lord went up from the midſt of the City, and then he ſtood upon the mountain, which is on the Eaſt-ſide of the City.* This is Gods laſt ſtop in his departure, by which is ſignified, that he was willing to

7 Motive.

Iſa. 1. 2, 3, 4, 16, 18. Ezek. 18. 31. Cap. 33. 11. Jer. 3. 13, 14.

Gen. 19. 16.

1 Sam. 4. 4. Pſalm 8. 10. Iſa. 37. 16.

make one tryal more, to see if the People would in this present danger call him back by invitation and lively repentance God is greatly troubled when it comes to parting, Hos. 11 8. *How shall I give thee up Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.* This is spoken *per anthropopatheian* and not properly, because diverse thoughts and repentance are not incident to God, Jam. 1. 17. *who is without all variableness, or shadow of change.* The Lord seemeth here to be at a stand, or at strife with himself about the destruction of this People. Howbeit God in the bowels of his mercy, yearning and taking pity of his Elect amongst them, spareth to lay upon them the extremity of his wrath, and is ready to save them for his mercies sake. Observe how fatherlike he melts and mournes over them, and how mercy interposeth her four several *Hows.* Here are four such pathetical interrogations, as the like are not to be found in the whole Book of God, and not to be answered by any but God himself, as indeed he doth to each particular in the following words, *My heart is turned within me*, that is the first answer; The second is, *My repentings are kindled together*; The third is, *I will not execute the fierceness of my wrath*; The fourth is, *I will not destroy Ephraim.* And why? First, *I am God and not man.* Secondly, *the Holy One in the midst of thee.* God is mighty unwilling to break up house, and to leave his People desolate. Now is God so unwilling to withdraw his presence, and shall not we do all what we can to retain him in the midst of us? When dear Friends are unwilling to leave us, we are the more earnest in pressing them to stay and abide with us; God is marvellously unwilling to go, and therefore let us with the Church cry out, *Leave us not*, Jerem. 14. 9.

But,

8 Motive. Eightly, To move you so to order, demean, and carry your selves, as that you may enjoy the gracious presence of God with you, in your greatest troubles and deepest

deepest distresses, consider, that troubles will be no troubles, distresses will be no distresses, dangers will be no dangers, if you can but secure the presence of God with you: Mountains will be mole-hills, stabs at the heart will be but as scratches upon the hand, if the Divine presence be with you; Gods signal presence will turn storms into calms, winter-nights into summer-days, prisons into pallaces, banishments into enlargments; The favourable presence of God will turn sickness into health, weakness into strength, poverty into plenty, and death into life. It can never be night so long as the Sun shines, no afflictions, no tryals can make it night with a Christian, so long as he enjoyes the presence of God with his spirit. 2 Tim. 4. 22. That Courtier needs not complain that this man slights him, and that the other neglects him, who enjoyes the delightful presence of his Prince. When *Sampson* had the presence of God with him, he made nothing of carrying the gates of the City with the posts and bars to the top of an hill: So whil'st a Christian enjoyes the singular presence of God with him, he will make nothing of this affliction and that, of this trouble and that, of this loss and that; This presence makes heavy afflictions light, and long afflictions short, and bitter afflictions sweet. It was this presence that made the Martyrs set light by all the great and grievous things, that they suffered for Christs sake and the Gospels sake. Gods gracious presence makes every condition to be a little Heaven to the believing soul. A man in misery without this gracious presence of God, is in a very hell on this side hell; there is nothing, there can be nothing but Heaven where God is signally present. But,

Judge 16. 3.

2 Cor. 4. 16, 17.

Heb. 11. 33. to 39.

Ninthly, To move you so to order, demean and carry your selves, as that you may enjoy the gracious presence of God with you in your greatest troubles and deepest distresses, consider that the worst of men cannot fasten a curse upon you, whil'st you keep the presence of God with you. Num. 23. 21. *The Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a King is among them.* There could be no en-

9 Motive.

Num. 23. 23.

enchantment against them, for the Lord their God was with them, & the shout of a King was among them; that is God reigneth as a King among them: Hereby also is meant the faith, joy, boldness, courage and confidence of Gods People in their King; as when a King comes amongst the Armies of his People, he is received with joyful shoutings and acclamations, and when he goes forth to battel with them, he goes accompanied with the sound of trumpets and shouts of the People, signes of their joy and courage: So it fared with the Israelites, because of that signal presence of God, that was amongst them, which was evident by his protecting and defending of them. 1 Sam. 4. 5. *And when the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord came into the Camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again.* Here is a valorous shout of a puissant People, encouraging each other to the battel, and a victorious shout as having obtained the victory in the battel. So 2 Chron. 13. 12: *And behold, God himself is with us for our Captain, and his Priests with sounding Trumpets, to cry alarm against you, O Children of Israel.* Num: 23. 23. *Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any Divination against Israel*; That is, there is none against Israel that shall be of force, or that shall take any effect, to do the posterity of *Jacob* or Israel any hurt, any harm, any prejudice: But why? because the Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a King is among them. The presence of God with his Israel blasts all *Balaams* enchantments, and makes null and void all his Divinations; God is with his People to counsel them in all doubtful and difficult cases, and to defend them, and secure them, against all their enemies and opposers: *Balaam* had a moneths mind to curse the People of God, as his unwearied endeavours to that purpose do abundantly evidence; But the presence of God with his People prevented all his mischievous designs. *Shemei* curses *David*; but his curses could not hurt him, for God was with him. The People generally cursed *Jeremiah*, but

Num. 23. 1, 13, 28 29. Cap. 24. 1. 2 Sam. 16. 7, 9, 11 12. Jer. 15. 10. Cap. 1. 17, 18, 19.

all

all their curſes could not harm him, for God was with him. The Jews in their prayers daily curſe the Chriſtian Churches, but all their curſes can't prejudice them, becauſe God is in the midſt of them; And who will ſay that the reformed Churches are one pin the worſe for all the Popes excommunications and execrations with Bell, Book and Candle? The ſignal preſence of God with his People is a moſt ſoveraign antidote againſt all the curſes and curſings of curſed men, and therefore what ever you part with, be ſure you don't part with your God, let him be but in the midſt of you, and then no curſes ſhall be prevalent againſt you. This age abounds with ſuch monſters whoſe mouths are full of curſes, but if every curſe ſhould ſtick a viſible bliſter on the curſers tongue, as it doth inſenſible ones on the curſers ſoul, their tongues would quickly be too big for their mouths, and they would ſoon grow weary of curſing the People of God, the things of God, the wayes of God, the providences of God, and the faithful diſpenſers of the myſteries of God; but the beſt of it is, when they have done their worſt and ſpit out all their curſes, the curſe cauſeleſs ſhall not come, for the ever bleſſed God is in his People, and with his People, and among his People, and a wall of fire alwayes about his People, and therefore they are ſafe and ſecure enough, when men and Devils have done their worſt. But,

Exod. 20. 24.

Prov. 26. 2.

Zach. 2. 5.

Tenthly and laſtly, To move you ſo to order, demean, and carry your ſelves, as that you may enjoy the gracious preſence of God with you, in your greateſt troubles and deepeſt diſtreſſes, conſider that the Divine preſence will make up the abſence of all outward comforts, this gracious preſence will ſupply and fill up the place of a friend, a child, a father, a husband. Some of the Rabbies write, that Manna had all ſorts of taſts, and all ſorts of ſweets in it: Sure I am, that the favourable preſence of God has all ſorts of ſweets in it, it has the ſweet of all ordinances in it, it has the ſweet of all duties in it, it has the ſweet of all Church priviledges in it, it has the ſweet of all Relations

10 Motive.

Pſal. 4. 6, 7.

Prov. 4. 23.

tions in it, It has the sweet of all your outward comforts in it, and therefore above all keeping, keep the presence of God with you. Many in their distresses and miseries are full of complaints; one cries out, he wants a faithful Friend; another cries out, he wants an active Relation; a third cries out, that he wants necessaries both for back and belly; a fourth cries out, he wants the means that others enjoy, but he that enjoyes the gracious presence of God finds all these wants made up to him, yea he finds the Divine presence to be infinitly better than the presence of all outward comforts. As *Elkanah* said to *Hannah*, *Am not I better than ten Sons?* So assuredly the presence of the Lord is wonderfully better than all other things to every soul that has tasted the sweetness of it. You know, that one Sun is more glorious, delightful, useful and comfortable than ten thousand Stars, so here. *Seneca* tells a Courtier that had lost his Son (*Fas tibi non est, salvo Cæsare, de fortuna tua queri, &c.*) That he had no cause to mourn, either for that or ought else, so long as his Soveraign was in safety, and he in favour with his Soveraign, he had all things in him, and he should be unthankfull to his good fortune, if he were not chearful both in heart and look, so long as things stood so with him as they did: How much more may we say to every sincere Christian, that enjoyes the gracious presence of God with him. Let thy wants and thy crosses be never so great, thy afflictions never so pressing, thy necessities never so biting, thou hast no just cause to be troubled or dejected, so long as thou art in favour with God, and enjoyest the presence of God. All mercies, all comforts, all contentments, all enjoyments they meet and center in the gracious presence of God, as all lights meet in the Sun, and as all waters meet in the Sea, and therefore let not that soul mourn or complain of the want of any thing, who enjoyes that gracious presence of God, that is better than every terrene thing. Thus much for the motives.

1 Sam. 1. 8.

But some may say, O Sir, what means should we use, that

that we may enjoy the gracious presence of the Lord with us in our greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers? I answer first there are some things that you must carefully shun and take heed off; As,

First, take heed of high sinnings, take heed of scandalous sins. High sinnings do greatly dishonour God, wound conscience, reproach Religion, stagger the weak, grieve the strong, open the mouths of the wicked, and provoke God to withdraw his gracious presence, *Psalm* 51. 11, 12. *Exod.* 32. 8. *Cap.* 33. 3. *Isa.* 63. 10. Turn to these Scriptures, and seriously ponder upon them. Great transgressions do eclypse the favour of God, as well as the honour of God; In great transgressions we turn our backs upon God, and God turns away his face from us. Gross sins will provoke God to withdraw his presence, both in respect of vigour and strength, as also in respect of peace and comfort. But,

Secondly, take heed of impenitency. Next to our being preserved from sin, it is the greatest mercy in the world, when we are fallen by our transgressions, to make a quick and speedy return to God: When by your sins you have made work for repentance, for hell, or for the Physician, Souls, immediatly make up the breach, take up the controversy between God and your souls, humble your selves, judge your selves, and speedily return to the most high. Thus *Peter* did, and recovered the favourable presence of God presently. But if men will commit sin, and lye in it, if they will fall, and have no mind to rise, God will certainly withdraw his favourable presence from them, as you see in *David* and *Solomon*. This is further evident in that case of *Achan*, Josh. 7. *The Israelites they came to fight with the men of Ai, and fled before them; for the Lord was not with them.* Why, what was the cause of Gods withdrawing himself? See *Verse* 11. *Israel hath sinned.* And *Verse* 12. *Therefore the Children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs.* Their sins having betrayed them into the hand of Divine Justice, and into their enemies hands also, Mark what

Hosea 6. 1. Exod. 32. 9. to 15.

Mat. 26. 75. Mar. 16. 7.

Psal. 51. 11, 12. 1 Kings 11. 9. Josh. 7. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

what followyes, *Neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from amongst you.* If we will not stone our *Achans*, our sins, by the lively exercise of faith and repentance; If we will keep up our lusts in despite of all that God does against us, we must never expect to retain the gracious presence of God with us. But,

Cant. 5. 2, 3, 6. Cant. 4. 1, 2, 3.

Thirdly, take heed either of neglecting Gospel-worship, or of corrupting Gospel-worship. Omissions will damn as well as commissions, and omissions will provoke God to withdraw his presence, as well as commissions. When persons are careless in their attendance on Gospel ordinances, no wonder if God withdraw his presence from them in their distresses. *Cain* went off from ordinances, and the Lord set a mark upon him. O the black and dismal marks of misery, that God has set upon many that have neglected Gospel-worship, and for profits sake, and for *Diana's* sake are fallen roundly in with the worship of the world! O Sirs, the great God stands upon nothing more in all the world than upon purity in his worship; There is nothing that doth so provoke & exasperate God against a People as corrupt worship; corrupt worship sadly reflects upon the Name of God, the honour of God, the truth of God, and the wisdom of God, and therefore his heart rises against such worship and worshippers, and he will certainly withdraw from them, and be a swift and terrible witness against them, as you may see by comparing the Scriptures in the margin together. Corrupt worship is contrary to the unity of God; Now deny his unity, and you deny his Deity, *For the Lord is one, and his Name is one*, Zach. 14. 9. 'Tis contrary to the soveraignty of God, *He is the only Ruler, the only Potentate*, 1 Tim. 6. 15. 'Tis contrary to the all-sufficiency of God. The Heathen worshipped several Gods, as thinking that several Gods did bestow several blessings; they begged health of one God, wealth of another God, and victory of a third God, thus imagining to themselves several Deities, for several supplies; their God was but a *Jupiter*, a partial helper, an auxiliary

Gen. 4. 15, 16.

2 Tim. 4. 10. Acts 19. 24, 36.

Psal. 106. 39. to 43. Psal. 78. 58. to 64. 2 Chro. 7. 19, 20, 21, 22. Cap. 32. 16. to 21 Deu. 29. 22. to 29

God

God, but *Our God is Jehovah*, who is abundantly able to ſupply all our wants. Now if either we neglect his true inſtituted worſhip, or fall in with a falſe worſhip, with a deviſed worſhip, with a humane worſhip, with a worldly worſhip, he will certainly withdraw his gracious preſence from us. Will-worſhip accuſes and charges God with weakneſs and folly, as if God were not careful enough, nor faithful enough, nor mindful enough, nor wiſe enough, to order, direct and guide his People in the matters of his worſhip, but muſt be beholding to the wiſdom, prudence, and care of man, of vain man, of ſinful man, of vile and unworthy man, of weak and fooliſh man, to compleat, perfect and make up ſomething that was wanting in his worſhip? Now aſſuredly, God will never keep houſe with them, who give in ſuch ſevere accuſations and charges againſt him. But,

Eph. 3. 20.

Heb. 3. 4, 5, 6. John 4. 23, 24.

Fourthly, take heed of a willing willful and preſumptuous running croſs to Divine commands, to Divine warnings. The diſobedient child is turn'd out of doors, the diſobedient ſervant ſhall have none of his Maſters ſmiles, the diſobedient wife has little of her husbands company; a willing willful preſumptuous running croſs to Divine commands ſpeaks out much pride, Atheiſm, hardneſs, blindneſs, and deſperate ſecurity and contempt of the great God; It ſpeaks out the greateſt diſingenuity, ſtoutneſs, and ſtubornneſs that is imaginable, and therefore no wonder if God turn his back upon ſuch, and if he diſdains to be in the midſt of ſuch, *Num.* 14. 42. *Go not up, for the Lord is not among you, that ye be not ſmitten before your enemies.* Verſe 43. *For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you,* (that is, on the top of the hill, lying in readineſs to ſet upon you, and therefore are ſaid, *To come down*, Verſe 45.) *And ye ſhall fall by the ſword, becauſe ye are turned away from the Lord, therefore the Lord will not be with you*, Verſe 44. But they preſumed to go up to the hill-top, though they had not the preſence of God with them, nor the ſigns of his grace & favour with them, nor the company of *Moſes* with them,

See Deu. 1. 42, 43, 44, 45, 46.

but mark, they paid dear for their presumption. Verse 45. *Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them even unto Hormah.* When men are without Gods presence, they are without Gods precincts, and so out of his protection. To act or run cross to Gods express command (though under pretence of revelation from God) is as much as a mans life is worth, as you may see in that sad story. 1 *Kings* 13. 24. We frequently deny our presence unto disobedient Persons, and so does God his; disobedience to Divine commands shuts the door against the Divine presence, and will not suffer God to come in to succour us, comfort us, or support us, under our greatest troubles, and deepest distresses. But

Adam in Paradice was overcome, when *Job* on the dunghil was a conqueror.

Fifthly, Take heed of carnal confidence, of resting upon an arm of flesh. *Psalm* 30. 6. *And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved*; that is, when I was prosperously settled in the Kingdom, I began to conclude within my self, that now there was an end of all my troubles, I should now live all my dayes in a prosperous estate. *David* having taken the strong Fort of *Zion*, and having vanquished his Enemies round about, and all the Tribes having submitted themselves to him, and having built a fair Palace, and being quietly settled in his Throne, he began to be puffed up with carnal confidence. Oh the hazard of honour! Oh the damage of dignity! how soon are we broken upon the soft pillow of ease? Flies settle upon the sweetest perfumes when cold, and so does sin on the best hearts, when they are dissolved and dispirited by prosperity. Oh how apt are the holiest of men to be proud and secure, and promise themselves more than ever God promised them, *viz.* Immunity from the Cross: He thought that his Kingdom and all prosperity was tyed unto him with cords of Adamant, he sitting quietly at *Jerusalem*, and free from fear of all his Enemies; but God quickly confutes his carnal confidence, by giving him to know, that he could as easily blast the strongest Oak, as he could trample the

2 Sam. 11. 1.

small-

ſmalleſt Worm under his feet. Verſe 7. *Thou didſt hide thy face, and I was troubled.* God will quickly ſuſpend his favour, and withdraw his preſence, when his Children begin to be proud and carnally confident. Look as at the Eclipſe of the Sun the whole frame of nature droops; ſo when God hides his face, when he withdraws his preſence, the beſt of Saints cannot but droop, and hang down their heads. So *Jerem.* 17. 5. *Curſed be the man that truſteth in man, and maketh fleſh his arm, and whoſe heart departeth from the Lord.* Verſe 6. *For he ſhall be like the heath in the deſart, and ſhall not ſee when good cometh.* But

Sixthly, Take heed of barrenneſs and unfruitfulneſs under Goſpel Ordinances, turn to theſe Scriptures, *Iſa.* 5. 1, to 8. *Matth.* 21. 34, to 42. 2 *Chron.* 32. 16. to the laſt. Of all ſpiritual judgments, barrenneſs is the greateſt; and when men are given up to this judgment God withdraws; he has no pleaſure to dwell in a barren ſoil; what are barren grounds, and barren wombs to barren hearts? he that remains wholly barren under Goſpel Ordinances, may well queſtion his marriage union with Chriſt. For *Rom.* 7. 4. We are ſaid to be *married to Chriſt, that we may bring forth fruit to God.* There is a double end of Marriage. *viz.* Cohabitation and propagation, and therefore there cannot be a greater and clearer evidence, that thou art not yet taken into a married union with Chriſt, than a total barrenneſs under Goſpel enjoyments. Chriſt's Spouſe is fruitful; *Cant.* 1. 16. *Our bed is green.* Cap. 4. 1. *Behold thou art fair my love, behold thou art fair: thou haſt doves eyes within thy locks: thy hair is as a flock of Goats, that appear from mount Gilead.* Verſe 2. *Thy teeth are like a flock of ſheep that are even ſhorn, which come up from the waſhing: whereof every one bears twins, and none is barren among them.* Chriſt hath no further delight in his People, nor will no further grace his People with his ſpecial preſence, than they make conſcience of weeping over their barrenneſs, and of bringing forth fruit to him. *Now my Husband will love me, now*

Ezek. 47. 11. Matth. 13. 19. Hoſea 9. 14. John 15. 2. Heb. 2. 6. 7, 8. Jude 12.

Cant. 7. 11, 12, 13

Gen. 29. 34. *he will be joyned to me, now I have born him this son also,* said *Leah*, so may the fruit-bearing soul reason it out with Christ: Now I know dear Jesus will love me, now I know he will delight in me, now I know he will dwell with me, now I know he will honour me with his presence, for now I bring forth fruit unto him. Barrenness under the means of grace, drives God from us, and the Gospel from us, and trade, and peace, and prosperity from us, and one Christian from another. *Ursin* observes, that the sins and barrenness of the Protestants under the Gospel in King *Edward's* dayes, brought in the persecution in Queen *Marie's* dayes; and he tells us, that those who fled out of *England* in Queen *Marie's* dayes, acknowledged, that that calamity befel them for their great unprofitableness under the means of grace in King *Edwards* dayes. Among other prodigies, which were about the time that *Julian* came to the Empire, there were wild Grapes appeared upon their vines, with which many wise men in that day were much affected, looking upon it as ominous. Ah *England! England!* I look upon nothing to be so ominous to thee, as the barrenness of the Professors of the day! no wonder if God leave his house, when the Trees that are planted in it, and about it are all barren. The Nutmeg-tree makes barren all the ground about it; so doth the spice of worldly love make the hearts of Christians barren under the means of grace. But I must hasten.

See my Unsearchable riches of Christ, p. 49. to 58.

Seventhly, Take heed of pride and haughtiness of Spirit: *Hosea* 5. 5. *And the pride of Israel doth testifie to his face: therefore shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity: Judah also shall fall with them.* Ver. 6. *They shall go with their flocks, and with their herds to seek the Lord, but they shall not find him, he hath withdrawn himself from them.*

Ezek. 7. 10. Isa. 3. 16. to 25.

Pride is the great master-pock of the soul, it will bud, and blossom, it cannot be hid; it is the Leprosie of the soul, that breaks forth in the very forehead, and so testifieth to his face. Some have called *Rome*, *Epitomen universi*, *An Epitome, or Abridgement of the whole world*: So it may

may be said of pride, that it is the sum of all naughtiness, a Sea of sin, a complicated sin, a mother sin, sin, a breeding sin, a sin that has all sorts of sin in the womb of it; consult the Scriptures in the margin. *Aristotle* speaking of Justice, saith, that in Justice all virtues are couched, συλλήβδην, *summarily*; so it may be truly said of pride, that in it all vices are as it were in a bundle lapped up together; and therefore no wonder if God withdraw his presence from proud persons, [*He hath withdrawn himself from them.*] Heb. *Hath snatcht away himself*; hath thrown himself out of their company, as *Peter* threw himself out from the rude Souldiers into a by-corner, to weep bitterly. God will have nothing to do with proud persons, he will never dwell with them, he will never keep house with them; he that dwells in the highest heavens, will never dwell in a haughty heart. [*The proud he knoweth afar of*] He won't vouchsafe to come so near such loathsome Lepers, he stands of from such as odious and abominable, he cannot abide the sight of them, yea his very heart rises against them. *James* 4. 6. *God resisteth the proud*, ἀντιτάσσεται, *He sets himself in battel-array against him*, as the Greek word emphatically signifies. Above all sorts of sinners, God sets himself against proud persons, as invaders of his territories, and forragers or plunderers of his chief treasures: God defieth such as deifie themselves; God will arm himself against them, he will never vouchsafe his gracious presence to them; and therefore as ever you would enjoy the Divine presence arm against pride, watch against pride, and pray hard against pride. But

Hab. 1. 16. Isa. 48. 9. Cap. 26. 12. Hab. 2. 5, &c.

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Mark 14. 72.

Isa. 57. 15. Psalm 138. 6.

Prov. 15. 25. Cap. 16. 5.

Eighthly, Take heed of a slothful, lazy, trifling Spirit in the things of God: *Cantic.* 5. 2. *I sleep but my heart waketh; it is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my Sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.* Verse 3. *I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?*

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Christs head is filled with dew, *i. e.* Christ came to his Spouse, full of the dew of spiritual and heavenly blessings: Christ alwayes brings meat in his mouth, and a reward in his hand: Christ never visits his People empty handed; he is no beggarly or niggardly Guest, when he comes he brings every thing that heart can wish or need require; and now stand and wonder at the silly excuse that the Spouse makes for her self: Trouble me not for I am in bed, my clothes are off, my feet are washed, and I am composed to a settled rest: But are you so indeed? (might Christ have replied) Is this your kindness to your friend? is this the part and posture of a vigilant Christian? would it not have been much better for you to have had your loyns girt, your lamp burning, and you waiting for your Lords return? Is it so great a trouble? Is it such a mighty business for you to rise out of your bed, to put on your clothes, and to let in such a Guest, as comes not to take any thing from you, but to enrich you with the best and noblest of favours? Now mark how severely Christ punishes his Spouses sluggishness, lazyness, slothfulness, and delayes to entertain him when he knocked. Verse 6. *I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spake; I sought him but I could not find him: I called him but he gave no answer*; or he was gone, he was gone, a most passionate complaint for his departure, or my best-beloved was departed, he was gone away: By the iteration or doubling of this sentence, wherein the Spouse complains of the departure of her Bridegroom, is signified her great trouble, her hearty sorrow, her inexpressible grief, that lay as a heavy load upon her spirit, because by her unworthy usage of him, she had foolishly occasioned him to withdraw his presence from her. Spiritual desertions are of three sorts: 1. Cautional for preventing of sin as *Pauls* seems to be. 2. Probational for trial and exercise of grace. 3. Penal, for chastisement of Spiritual sloth and sluggishness, as here in the Spouse; now this last is far the saddest and heaviest, and

Ephes. 1. 3, 4. Revel. 22. 12.

Cap. 3. 17, 19.

2 Sam. 16. 17.

2 Cor. 12, 8, 9.

and therefore as ever you would enjoy the gracious preſence of the Lord, take heed of a lazy, ſlothful, ſluggiſh ſpirit, in the things of God, in the concernments of your ſouls. That man muſt needs be miſerable, that is lazy and ſlothful, and had rather go ſleeping to hell, than ſweating to heaven. But

Ninthly, Take heed of a covetous worldly ſpirit, under the ſmarting Rod, under the ſevere rebukes of God. *Iſa.* 57. 17. *For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs I was wroth and ſmote him; I hid me and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart.* Covetouſneſs was the common ſin of the Jews, this diſeaſe had infected all ſorts and ranks of men, this Leproſie did ſpread it ſelf over Princes, Prophets and People, as you may ſee in comparing the Scriptures in the margin together. Now *covetouſneſs being the root of all evil*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, and the Darling ſin of the Nation, God is ſo provoked by it, that he firſt ſmites and then hides himſelf, as one that in diſpleaſure, having left one to the evil, and harſh uſage of ſome other withdraweth himſelf out of the way, and having ſhut himſelf up in his cloſet, will not be ſeen or ſpoken with. A worldly man makes the world his God, covetouſneſs is flat Idolatry: *Coloſſ.* 3. 5. *Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanneſs, inordinate affection, evil concupiſcence, and covetouſneſs which is Idolatry.* Now though it be true that what ever a man loves moſt and beſt, that is his God, be it his belly, or his back; yet in a ſpecial manner covetouſneſs is Idolatry, ſo as no other ſin is. Three things eſpecially make a God: Firſt, our judgement, when we eſteem it in our ſerious thoughts to be our chiefeſt good, and that in which we place our happineſs: Now the covetous man looks upon the riches of the world, as his heaven, his happineſs, his great all. Pope *Silveſter* placed ſo much happineſs in riches that, to enjoy the Popedom for ſeven years, he ſold his ſoul to the Devil. The People of *Conſtantinople* placed ſo much of their happineſs in riches, and were ſo exceſſively

Iſai. 56. 11. Jer. 6. 13. Cap. 8. 10. 1 Tim. 6. 10.

Phil. 3. 19. Iſa. 3. 16, to 25.

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covetous, that they were buying and selling in their shops, even three dayes after the Turks were within the walls of the City, and that was the reason that the streets run down with the bloed of them, their wives and children. Secondly, Our confidence, that is a homage which makes a God, when we place our trust in any thing, make it our rock, our fortress, our all-sufficient good, this the covetous man doth: *He saith to the wedge of gold, thou art my confidence.* The rich mans heart dances about his Golden-calf, saying to his *wedg of gold, thou art my confidence*; and yet his wedge of gold shall prove but as *Achans* wedge, a wedge to cleave his soul in sunder, and as that Babylonish garment to be his winding-sheet. [*The rich mans wealth is his strong City.*] Covetous persons do really think themselves simply the better, and the safer for their hoards and heaps of riches; but they may one day find themselves greatly mistaken. Famous is that story of *Crœsus* among the Heathens, he was a great King, and tumbled up and down in his gold and silver, and *Solon* that wise man of *Greece*, coming into his Countrey, he desired to speak with him, and when he saw him, after *Solon* had seen and viewed all his wealth and glory, he asked him, whom he thought to be the happiest man in the world, imagining that *Solon* would have said *Crœsus*: But *Solon* answered, I think *Tellus* was the most happy man. *Tellus*, saith he; why *Tellus?* Because, said *Solon*, though he was poor, yet he was a good man, and content with that which he had; and having governed the Common-wealth well, and brought up his Child honestly and religiously, he died honourably. Well then, said *Crœsus*, but who doest thou think the second happy man in the world? I think, said he, those two Brothers, that instead of Horses drew their Mother in a Chariot to the Temple. Whereupon said *Crœsus*, what thinkest thou of me? I think, says he, thou art a very rich man; but a man may be happy though he be poor, and a man may be unhappy though he be rich, for he may lose all his riches before he dye; and

Job 21. 34.

Joshua 7. 21. to ult.

Prov. 10. 15. See 1 Tim. 6. 27.

Herodot. lib. 1.

and therefore *Ante obitum nemo*, I think none truly happy, but he that lives well, and dyes well: Whereupon that Wiſe man *Solon* was diſmiſſed the Court with neglect. But afterward this *Cræſus* making War againſt *Cyrus*, he was overcome by *Cyrus*; and being taken captive, he was laid upon a pile of wood to be burned to death, then lying on the pile of wood, he cried out and ſaid: O *Solon*, *Solon*, *Solon*. *Cyrus* enquiring, what he meant? He anſwered, this *Solon* was a Wiſe man of *Greece*, that told me, that happineſs did not conſiſt in riches, for they might all be loſt, and a rich man might die miſerable: Whoſe words, ſaid he, I then neglected, but now I find true; and therefore now I cry out, O *Solon*, *Solon*, *Solon*! Let us now tell the covetous man, the worldly man, that his happineſs lyes not in riches, though he looks upon his riches as his ſtrong City; he won't mind us, he won't regard. O but there is a time a coming wherein the worldling will cry out: O *Solon*, *Solon*, *Solon*! Thirdly, Our ſervice, that is a homage which makes a God, when we devote all our pains, labour, and ſervice to it, be it this or that, that makes a God: Now the covetous man his heart is moſt upon the world, his thoughts are moſt upon the world, his affections are moſt upon the world, and his diſcourſe is moſt about the world; he that hath his mind taken up with the world, and chiefly delighted with the world's muſick, he hath alſo his tongue tuned to the ſame Key, and taketh his joy and comfort in ſpeaking of nothing elſe, but the world and worldly things: If the world be in the heart it will break out at the lips; a worldly minded man ſpeaketh of nothing but worldly things. [*They are of the world, therefore they ſpeak of the world.*] The water riſeth not above the fountain; out of the warehouſe the ſhop is furniſhed; the love of this world makes men forget God, neglect Chriſt, ſlight Ordinances, refuſe Heaven, deſpiſe holineſs, and oyles the tongue for worldly diſcourſes: Ah the time, the thoughts, the ſtrength, the ſpirits, the words that are ſpent upon the

Matth. 6. 24.

John 4. 5.

Matth. 19. 21, 22.

world, and the things of the world, whilst sinners souls lye a bleeding, and Eternity is posting on upon them! I have read of a griping Usurer, who was alwayes best when he was most in talking of the world, being near his end he was much prest to make his will, at last he was overcome, and then he dictates to the Scrivener after this manner: First, I bequeath my own soul to the Devil, for being so greedy of the muck of this world: Item, next I give my wifes soul to the Devil, for perswading me to this course of life: Item I give the Parson of our Parish's soul to the Devil, because he did not shew me the danger I lived in, nor reprove me for it. O the danger of making the world our God, when we come to die, and to make up our accounts with God. Now when men make the world their God, and set up their riches, pleasures, and profits in the place of God, no wonder if God withdraws his presence from them, and therefore as ever you would retain the gracious presence of God with you, take heed of a covetous spirit, a worldly spirit. But

Tenthly and lastly, As ever you would enjoy the gracious presence of God with you in your greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, take heed of a Cross, froward, and inflexible Spirit under the Rod: When the Child is froward under the Rod, the Father withdraws; so here, *Isa.* 57.17. *I was wroth, I smote him, I hid me and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart.* Though I manifested my displeasure by giving them up to their Enemies, and by giving them under the tokens of my anger, they persisted in their own cross, crooked, and rebellious courses, refusing to repent and turn to the most High; and therefore God changes his countenance, hides his face, and withdraws his presence from them: *Deut.* 32.20. *And he said, I will hide my face from them, for they are a very froward generation.* Heb. *A generation of perverseness.* When the sick man is froward, Friends withdraw and leave him alone, *Psalm* 18. ver. 26. *With the froward thou wilt shew*

See my Mute Christian under the smarting rod.

Isa. 47. 6.

ſhew thy ſelf froward. God will meet with froward perſons in their own way, and make them reap the fruits of their own doings. God will walk croſs and contrary to the froward, oppoſing and croſſing them in all they do. God has no delight to grace froward perſons with his preſence; when men begin to be froward under a Divine hand, God commonly hides his face, and turns his back upon them; Men ſick of impatiency, are no fit company for the God of all patience; men that are peeviſh and pettiſh under the Rod, will alwayes ſee a cloud upon the face of God; and thus you ſee that there are ten things that you muſt carefully take heed of, as you would enjoy the gracious preſence of God with you, in your greateſt troubles, deepeſt diſtreſſes, and moſt deadly dangers.

Rom. 15. 5. Prov. 11. 20.

But Secondly, As there are many things to be avoided, ſo there are ſeveral things to be put in practice, as you would enjoy the gracious preſence of God with you, in your greateſt troubles, deepeſt diſtreſſes, and moſt deadly dangers, let me glance at a few.

First, Be ſure that you are brought under the bond of the Covenant. This gracious ſignal preſence of God with his People, under their greateſt troubles, and deepeſt diſtreſſes, is peculiar to thoſe that are in Covenant with God. *Noah* was in Covenant with God, and God was with him, providing an Ark for him, and preſerving of him from drowning in the midſt of drowning. *Lot* was in Covenant with God, and God was with him, and ſecures him in *Zoar*, when he rained Hell out of Heaven upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*. *Joſeph* was in Covenant with God, and God was with *Joſeph* in priſon. *Jeremiah* was in Covenant with God, and God kept him company in the Dungeon. The three Children (or rather Champions) were in Covenant with God, and God was ſignally preſent with them in the fiery Furnace. *Daniel* was in Covenant with God, and God was wonderfully with him in the Lions Den.

Ezek. 20. 37. Pſalm 25. 14. Pſalm 50. 5. Jer. 32. 40, 41. Geneſ. 6. 8. 18.

Cap. 19. 20, to 26.

Ge. 39. 20, 21, 22. Jer. 1, 17, 18, 19. Cap. 37. 15. ult. Dan. 3. 23, 24, 25. Cap. 6. 22, 23.

Job 3.12,13. Psal.89.33,34. Psal.23.4.

Job was in Covenant with God, and God was with him in six troubles, and in seven. *David* was in Covenant with God, and God was with him in the valley of the shadow of death. Take not up in a name to live, nor in a form of godliness, nor in common convictions, nor in an outward reformation, take up in nothing below a

Deut. 26. 17, 18,19.

Covenant-relation, as you would enjoy the precious presence of the Lord with you in your greatest troubles, and deepest distresses; if you chuse him for your God you shall then assuredly find him to be your God; if he be the God of our love and fear, he will be the God of our comfort and safety; if God be your God in Covenant, then in distress the cities of refuge are open to you; he will stick close to you, he will never leave you nor forsake you, you have a Father to go to, a God to flee to, a God that will take care of you, [*Come my People, enter thou into thy Chambers, and shut thy doors about thee, hide thy self, as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.*] Here are Chambers (withdrawing rooms provided) not open Chambers, but with doors, and doors shut round about, intimating that guard of protection, which the People of God shall find from him, even in a common inundation. But,

Heb.13.5,6,7.

Secondly, if you would enjoy the gracious presence of God with you, in your greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, then look to the practical part of holyness keep up the power of godlyness in your hearts and lives, Joh. 14. 21. *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest my self to him.* Ver: 23. *If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.* He that frames his heart and life according to Christs rule, shall be sure of Christs presence. *Ezekiel* was a man that kept up the power of holyness and godliness in his heart and life; And O, the glorious visions, and deep mysteries, and rare discoveries of God, and

2 Chron.15.2.

This is evident throughout the whole Book of the Prophet *Ezekiel*. See Cap. 2.4.7.8. 9.10.11.12.

and of his preſence, and of the great things that ſhould be brought about in the latter days, that was diſcovered to him! *Daniel* kept up the power of holyneſs and godlineſs in his heart and life; And O, what ſecrets and myſteries did God reveal to him! Many of thoſe great and glorious things, which concerns the deſtruction of the four laſt Monarchies, and the growth, increaſe, exaltation, flouriſhing, durable, invincible and unconquerable eſtate of his own Kingdom was diſcovered to him. *Paul* was a perſon that kept up the power of holyneſs and godlineſs in his heart and life; And O, what a mighty preſence of God had he with him, in all his doing, ſuffering and witneſſing work! And O, what glorious revelations and diſcoveries of God had he, when he was caught up into the third Heaven, into Paradiſe, & heard unſpeakable words, or wordleſs words, ſuch as words were to weak to utter, *Such as was not poſſible for man to utter*, and that either becauſe they tranſcended mans capacity in this life, or elſe becauſe the Apoſtle was forbid to utter them, they being revealed to him, not for the publick uſe of the Church, but only for his particular encouragment, that he might be the better able to encounter with all hardſhips, difficulties, dangers and deaths, that did or might attend him in his Miniſterial work. Some of the Ancients are of opinion, that he ſaw Gods eſſence, for ſay they, other things in Heaven might have been uttered, but the eſſence of God is ſo great and ſo glorious a thing that no man or Angel can utter it. But here I muſt crave lieve to enter my diſſent from theſe learned men, for the Scripture is expreſs in this, *That no man hath thus ever ſeen the Lord at any time, & that no man can thus ſee the Lord, and live:* And as great a Favourite of Heaven as *Moſes* was, yet he could only ſee the back parts of God, he could only behold ſome lower repreſentations of God. Some ſay, that he heard the Heavenly ſinging of Angels, and bleſſed Spirits, which was ſo ſweet, ſo excellent and glorious, that no mortal man was able to utter it; and this of the two is moſt proba-

2 Cor. 1. 7, 8, 9, 10

Joh. 1. 18. 1 Tim. 6. 16. 1 Joh. 4. 12. Exod. 33. 20, 21, 22, 23.

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ble. But no man is bound to make this opinion an Article of his Faith; This I think we may safely conclude, that in this rapture, besides the contemplation of Celestial mysteries, he felt such unspeakable delight and pleasure, that was either like to that, or exceeded that which *Adam* took in the Terrestrial Paradise; Doubtless the Apostle did see and hear such excellent things, as was impossible for the tongue of any mortal man to express, or utter. *John was a burning and a shining Light*, both in life and doctrine; he was a man that kept up in his heart and life the power of holyness and godliness, and Christ reveales to him the general estate of his Church, and all that should befal his People, and that from *John*'s time unto his second coming; Christ gives *John* a true representation of all the troubles, tryals, changes, mercies and glories, that in all times, and in all ages and places should attend his Church, until he came in all his glory. About sixty years after Christs Ascension, Christ comes to *John*, and opens his heart, and unbosomes his soul, and makes known to him, all that care, that love, that tenderness, that kindness and that sweetness, that he would exercise towards his Church, from that very time to the end of the world. Christ tells *John*, that though he had been absent, and seemingly silent for about threescore years, that yet he was not so taken up with the delights, contents, and glory of Heaven, as that he did not care what became of his Church on earth, O no! and therefore he opens his choicest secrets, and makes known the most hidden and glorious mysteries to *John*, that ever was made known to any man; as there was none that had so much of the heart of Christ as *John*, so there was none had so much of the ear of Christ as *John*; Christ singles out his servant *John* from all the men in the world, and makes known to him all the happy providences, and all the sad occurrences that were to come upon the followers of the Lamb, that so they might know what to fit for, and what to pray for, and what to wait for; Also he declares to *John* all

John 5. 35.

*'Tis the general opinion of the learned, that this Book of the Revelation was penned about the latter end of the reign of *Domitian* the Emperour which was about sixty years after Christs Ascension.

all that wrath and vengance, all that deſolation and deſtruction that ſhould come upon the falſe Prophet, and the Beaſt, and upon all that wandered after them, and that were worſhippers of them, and that had received their marks, either in their foreheads or in their hands. Thus you ſee, that they which keep up the power of holyneſs in their hearts and lives, they ſhall be ſure to enjoy the choiceſt preſence of God, and the cleareſt, fulleſt and ſweeteſt diſcoveries of God, and of theſe great things that concern the internal and eternal good of their ſouls. Nothing wins upon God like holyneſs, nothing delights God like holyneſs, nothing engages the preſence of God like holyneſs. He ſhews his ſalvation to him that ordereth his converſation aright; He that puts every piece of his converſation in the right order, he ſhall ſee and know that he ſhall be ſaved; He that walks accurately and exactly, that walks as in a frame treading gingerly, ſtepping warily, he ſhall have a proſpect of Heaven here, and a full fruition of Heaven hereafter, [*Thou meeteſt him that rejoyceth, and worketh righteouſneſs, thoſe that remember thee in thy wayes.*] He that works righteouſneſs and walks in righteouſneſs, ſhall be ſure to meet with God, & to enjoy the precious preſence of God in his greateſt troubles & deepeſt diſtreſſes. But,

Pſal. 50. ult. *Vide Muſ in loc.*

Iſa. 64. 5.

Thirdly, If you would enjoy the gracious preſence of God with you, in your greateſt troubles, deepeſt diſtreſſes, and moſt deadly dangers, then keep cloſe to inſtituted worſhip, keep cloſe to Goſpel ordinances, keep cloſe to your Church ſtate, *Exod.* 20. 24. *In all places where I record my Name, I will come unto thee and bleſs thee.* Where God fixeth his ſolemn worſhip for the memorial and honour of his Name, there he will vouchſafe his gracious preſence. *Mat.* 18. 20. *For where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midſt of them.* The promiſe of Gods gracious aſſiſtance, preſence, and acceptance is annexed to his Church, whether it be great or ſmall, numerous or few. *Mat.* 28. 20. *Lo, I am with you alway*, according to my Godhead,

Iſa. 64. 5. Rev. 2. 1 Cant. 7. 5. Ezek. 48. ult.

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Christ in his ordinances doth as Mary open a box of ointments, which diffuseth a spiritual savour among the Saints and this makes the ordinances precious in their eyes.

Majesty, grace and spirit; Lo, I am with you to own you; Lo, I am with you to counsel and direct you; Lo, I am with you to cheer and comfort you; Lo, I am with you to assist and strengthen you; Lo, I am with you to shelter you, and protect you; Lo, I am with you to do all your works in you, and for you; Lo, I am with you to strengthen your graces, and to weaken your sins; Lo, I am with you to scatter your fears, and answer your doubts; Lo, I am with you to better your hearts, and to mend your lives; Lo, I am with you to bless you and crown you with immortality and glory. And what can the soul desire more? Such as have low thoughts of Gospel-ordinances, such as slight Gospel-ordinances, such as neglect Gospel-ordinances, such as vilify Gospel-ordinances, such as decry Gospel-ordinances, such as oppose Gospel-ordinances, such may talk of the presence of Christ, and such may boast of the presence of Christ, but all such are out of the way of enjoying the presence of Christ; Christ is only to be met with in his own worship and in his own ways. Ah how many in these dayes are there that are like to old *Barzillai*, that had lost his tast and hearing, and so cared not for *David*'s feasts and musick! How many are there that formerly were very zealous for ordinances, but now are as zealous against them! How many formerly have made many great, hard & dangerous ventures to enjoy Gospel ordinances, who now won't venture a broken shin for an ordinance, no nor stir out of doors to enjoy an ordinance, *&c.* How many in our dayes upon neglecting and despising Gospel-ordinances, have grown from naught to be very naught, and from very naught to be stark naught! He shall be an *Apollo* to me, that can shew me one man in the world, that ever grew better or holyer by neglecting or slighting Gospel-ordinances. Many come to the ordinances too like the *Ægyptian* Dog, which laps a little as he runs by the side of *Nylus*, but stays not to drink. How many in this great City run every Sabbath to hear this man and that, and here they lap

2 Sam. 19. 35.

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a little and there a little, but never ſtay to drink, never fix in this Congregation or that, this way or that. Theſe perſons are neither wiſe, ſerious, lovely nor lively in the ways of God. I think they are judicially blinded and hardned, that are indifferent whether they enjoy ordinances or not, or that can part with ordinances, with dry eyes. Surely the Child is either very ſullen, or very ſick that cryes not for the breaſt. As ever you would enjoy the gracious preſence of God with you in all your troubles and diſtreſſes, make conſcience of ſticking cloſe to Goſpel-ordinances. But, Zeph. 3. 18.

Fourthly, If you would enjoy the gracious preſence of God with you in your greateſt troubles, deepeſt diſtreſſes and moſt deadly dangers, then when you are not in troubles, diſtreſſes, dangers, *&c.* be ſure you make much conſcience of five things, 1. Of prizing his preſence above all other things, ſo *Moſes* did; ſo *Auguſtin* would willingly go through Hell to Chriſt, and *Luther* had rather be in Hell with Chriſt, than in Heaven without him; and *Bernard* had rather have Chriſt in a chimny corner, than be in Heaven without him. 2. Of improving this gracious preſence againſt ſin, the world, the fleſh, oppoſitions and temptations, *&c.* 3. Of walking ſutable to this gracious preſence. 4. Of lamenting and mourning over thoſe that want this gracious preſence. 5. Of holding any ſecret intelligence or correſpondence with the profeſt and known enemies of Chriſt; Princes will never vouchſafe their favourable preſence to ſuch ſubjects as hold any ſecret intelligence with their profeſt & known enemies, either at home or abroad, ſo here. But, Ex. 33. 13. to 17.

Fifthly, If you would enjoy the gracious preſence of God with you in your greateſt troubles, deepeſt diſtreſſes, and moſt deadly dangers, then in all your troubles and diſtreſſes, *&c.* maintain uprightneſs and integrity of ſpirit with God, 2 *Chron.* 16. 9. *For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole Earth, to ſhew himſelf ſtrong in the behalf of them whoſe heart is perfect towards him.* Pſalm 84. 11. *For the Lord God is a Sun and ſhield, the* Pſal. 5. 12.

Lord will give grace and glory, no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. This is the largest promise we find in the whole Book of God. The Creature stands in need of two things, Provision and Protection; for the first, the Lord is a Sun, as full of goodness as the Sun is of light; He is a Sun, in that he doth enlighten and enliven his Church, when as all the world besides lye under darkness and the shadow of death; and in that he doth chear, and warm, and comfort the hearts of his People by his presence and lightsome countenance, and is the fountain from whence all external, internal, and eternal blessings are derived to them; For the se-
Psal. 18. 2. cond, a Shield: Among all inanimate Creatures the Sun is the most excellent, and among all artificial Creatures a Shield is chiefest, and was of greatest use in those dayes; The *Sun* notes all manner of excellency and prosperity,
Isa. 60. 20. Psal. 3. 4. and the *Shield* notes all manner of protection whatsoever, under the name of *grace* all spiritual good things are to be understood, and under the name of *glory* all eternal good things are to be understood, and under that phrase of, *No good thing will he withhold*, all temporal good things are to be understood, so far as they make for his glory, and his Peoples real good. Now this choice, this sweet, this full, this large promise is made over only to the upright, & therefore as you would have any share in it, maintain your uprightness; *Psalm* 11. 7. *His countenance doth behold the upright*, Heb. *His faces*. Every gracious discovery of God to the upright, is his face; God will all manner of wayes make gracious discoveries of his love and delight to upright ones; No Father can so much delight to behold the countenance of his child, as God delights to behold the countenance of the upright, *Psalm* 112. 4. *Unto the upright there ariseth light in darkness*; Light commonly signifies joy,
Job 30. 26. Esth. 8. 16. 2 Cor. 6. 10. comfort, peace, help, deliverance. The upright man shall have joy in tribulation, plenty in penury, liberty in bonds, life in death, as the Martyrs have frequently and gloriously experienced. Sometimes God turnes the

upright

upright mans adversity into prosperity, his sickness into health, his weakness into strength, his night into day, his stormes into calmes, his long Winter-nights into pleasant Summer-days. Sometimes God hides his upright ones in the hollow of his hand, in his pavilion, in his presence-chamber; when his judgments are abroad in the earth, he takes special care of his Jewels, and many times when the upright are in darkness and in great distress, God cheers their hearts with the consolations of his Spirit, and the light of his countenance. By all which it is most evident, that *Unto the upright there ariseth light in darkness.* O Sirs, do but maintain your uprightness in all your troubles and distresses, and then you will be sure of the gracious presence of God with you in all your troubles and distresses. God values an upright *Job* upon a Dunghil, before a deceitful *Jehu* upon his Royal Throne; he sets a higher price upon an upright *Lazarus* in rags, than upon a rich *Dives* in his purple robes; And therefore when an upright man is in troubles and distresses God will be sure to keep him company. The upright mans Motto is *semper idem*, he is like the Philosophers Dye, cast him which way you will, and into what condition you will, he is still upright, and therefore of all persons God loves to grace the upright man with his gracious presence. But,

Isa. 26.9, 20. Mal. 3. 17.

Psal. 94. 19. Psal. 71. 20, 21.

Job 1.8. Cap. 2. 3, 7, 8, 9. Luke 16.

Sixthly, If you would enjoy the gracious presence of God with you, in all your troubles, deep distresses and most deadly dangers, then you must be very earnest and importunate with God not to leave you, but to stay with you, to abide with you, and to dwell in the midst of you, *Psalm* 148. 18. *The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him*; (but to prevent mistakes, I mean) *to all that call upon him in truth.* There are many that call upon God, but not in truth, from these God stands at a distance; There are others that call upon God in truth, in plainness and singleness of heart, and these God are near, not only in regard of his essence, which is every where, but also in regard of the effects of his power, and

Prov. 1.28 Isa. 1. 11. to 17. Deut. 4.4. 2 Joh. 4.

the readineſs of his will in granting their requeſts. *Abijah* prays, and finds an admirable preſence of God with him, giving him a mighty victory over his moſt powerful enemy, 2 *Chron.* 13. 3, 10, 11, 17, 18. *Aſa* prays, & finds ſuch a ſingular preſence of God with him, as made him victorious over an hoſt of a thouſand thouſand, and three hundred Chariots, a huger hoſt than that of *Xerxes*; *Joſephus* ſaith, it conſiſted of nine hundred thouſand foot, and one hundred thouſand horſe, 2 *Chron.* 14. 9. to the end. *Jehoſhaphat* prayes, and had ſuch a ſignal preſence of God with him, that thoſe numerous forces that were combined againſt him fall by their own ſwords, 2 *Chron.* 20. 1. to the 11. *Verſe*, with *Ver.* 22. 23, 24, 25. The wrath of God wrought their ruin as by an ambuſcado unexpectedly and irreſiſtibly; Some underſtand this ambuſhment of the holy Angels ſent ſuddenly in upon them to ſlay them; whereupon they miſtaking the matter, and ſuppoſing it had been their own Companions, flew upon them, and ſo ſheathed their ſwords in one anothers bowels. Others ſay, that the Lord did ſuddenly and unexpectedly cut them off, as when men are cut off by enemies that lye in ambuſh againſt them, and that by ſending ſome unexpected ſtrife among thoſe Nations, whereupon they fell out among themſelves and ſlew one another, and ſo accompliſhed that which the Levite had foretold *Verſe* 17. *Ye ſhall not need to fight in this Battel, ſet your ſelves, ſtand ye ſtill and ſee the ſalvation of the Lord with you. O Judah and Jeruſalem, fear not, nor be diſmayed, to morrow go out againſt them, for the Lord will be with you.* It was the preſence of God with his People, that was their preſervation, and their enemies deſtruction; there is no power, no force, no ſtrength, no combinations that can ſtand before the powerful preſence of God with his People, and a ſpirit of prayer upon his People. *Hezekiah* prays and finds ſuch a powerful preſence of God with him, as bears up his heart, and as ſtrengthens his faith, and as cuts off his enemies, *Iſa.* 37. 14. to 21. with *Verſe* 36. O beg hard of

They were carried by ſuch a ſpirit of rage and fury, that no man ſpared his Neighbour, but each one deſtroyed him that was next him.

of the Lord that he will ſtay with you, do as they did when Chriſt made as though he would have gone from them, *Luke* 24. 29. *But they conſtrained him, ſaying, abide with us, for it is towards evening and the day is far ſpent; and he went in to tarry with them.* By prayer and importunity lay hold on Chriſt, ſay, Lord night is near, the night of trouble, the night of diſtreſs, the night of danger, the night of death is near, ſtay with us, depart not from us. They over-intreated him by their importunity, they compelled him by intreaty: *Night is near, and the day is far ſpent.* Some conjecture, that *Cleophas* obſerving Chriſt to be very expert in the Prophets, and to diſcourſe ſo admirable well of Chriſts perſon, ſufferings and glory, his heart burning in him with muſing, who this ſhould be! he is marvellous importunate with him to ſtay at his houſe, and at laſt prevailes. O lay a hand of holy violence upon God as *Jacob* did, and ſay (as he) *I will not let thee go*; *Jacob* though lamed and hard laid at, yet will not let Chriſt go; *Jacob* holds faſt with both hands when his joynts were out of joynt, being fully reſolved that what ever he did let go, he would not let go his Lord till he had bleſt him. O be often a crying out with *Jeremiah*, *Leave us not*: Lord, though in our great troubles and deep diſtreſſes, friends ſhould leave us, and Relations leave us, and all the world leave us, yet don't thou leave us, O don't thou leave us, Lord; though all Creatures ſhould deſert us, yet if thou wilt but ſtand by us, we ſhall do well enough: But wo, wo unto us, if God depart from us. O leave us not. But,

Seventhly, keep humble and walk humbly with your God. The higheſt Heavens and the loweſt hearts are the habitation of Gods glorious preſence, *Iſa.* 57. 15. *For ſaith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whoſe Name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy Place with him alſo that is of a contrite and humble ſpirit, to revive the ſpirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.* He that would in good earneſt enjoy the gracious preſence of God with him in his great troubles, deep diſtreſſes and moſt deadly dangers, he muſt keep humble, and

Luke 24.28. Equivocators abuſe this place greatly, but they muſt know, that Chriſt did not pretend one thing and intend another, but as he made an offer to depart ſo without queſtion he would have gone further, if the importunity of the Diſciples had not ſtaid him.

Gen. 32.25,26. Hoſ. 4. 12.

Jer. 14.9.

Mic. 6. 8. Pſal. 25. 9.

and walk humbly with his God; God will keep house with none but humble souls, there are none that feel so great a need of the Divine presence as humble souls, there are none that so prize the divine presence as humble souls, there are none that so love the divine presence & that are so enamoured with the Divine presence as humble souls, there are none that so thirst & long for much of the Divine presence as humble souls, there are none that so lament and bewail the loss of the Divine presence as humble souls, there are none that make such a singular and through improvement of the Divine presence as humble souls, and therefore no wonder that of all the men in the world God singles out the humble Christian, to make his heart the habitation where his honour delights to dwell. *Abraham* is but dust and ashes in his own eyes, and what man on earth had ever more of the Divine presence of God with him, than he? *Gen.* 15. 12. to 19. *Gen.* 17. 1. to 10. *Gen.* 18. 17, 18, 19, *&c.* *Jacob* was less than the least of all mercies in his own eyes, & he had a mighty presence of God with him, *Gen.* 32. 24. to 31. *&c.* *David* in his own eyes was but a worm & no man; The word in the Original *Tolagnath*, signifieth a very little worm which breedeth in scarlet, it is so little that no man can hardly see it or preceive it; and yet what a mighty presence of God had *David* with him in the many Battels he fought, and in the many dangers he was in, and in the many miraculous deliverances he had! See them all summed up in that 118 Psalm, it is his triumphant song after many victories won, deliverances vouchsafed, and mercies obtained, and therefore worthy of frequent perusal. *Paul* was the least of all Saints in his own eyes, yea he was less then the least of all Saints (ἐλαχιστοτέρῳ) this is a double diminutive, and signifies *lesser then the least*, if lesser might be; here you have the greatest Apostle descending down to the lowest step of humility. Great *Paul* is least of Saints, least of the Apostles, and greatest of sinners in his own eyes, and never had any mortal more of the gracious presence of God

Gen. 18. 27.

Gen. 32. 10.

Psal. 22. 6.

1 Cor. 15. 8.
1 Cor. 4. 9.
1 Tim. 1. 15.

God with him in all his services, and in all his sufferings, in all his afflictions, and in all his temptations, in all his trials, and in all his troubles, which were many and great. See *Acts* 16, 23, 24, 25. *Acts* 23. 10, 11. *Acts* 27, 23, 24, 25. 2 *Cor.* 1, 8, 9, 10. 2 *Cor.* 4. 8, 9, 10, 11. 2 *Cor.* 7. 4, 5, 6, 7. 2 *Cor.* 11. 21 — ult. 2 *Cor.* 12. 7, 8, 9, 10. Is your condition low, then let your hearts be low; he that is little in his own account, is great in Gods esteem, and shall be sure to enjoy most of his presence. God can dwell, God will dwell with none but those that are lowly in heart; and therefore as ever you would enjoy the signal presence of God with you, in your greatest troubles, and deepest distresses, be sure you walk humbly with your God. Many may talk much of God, and many may profess much of God, and many may boast much of God, but he only enjoys much of God, who makes conscience of walking humbly with God. But

Eightly and lastly, If you would enjoy the signal presence of God with you, in your greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, then labour every day more and more after greater measures of holiness; the more holiness you reach to, the more you shall have of the presence of a holy God with you, in all your straits and trials. If the Scriptures be narrowly searched, you will find that men of the greatest measures and degrees of holiness, have alwayes enjoyed the greatest measures of the Divine presence; witness *Enoch*, *Genes.* 5. 24. *Noah*, *Genes.* 6. 8, 9, 17, 18. So *Abraham*, *Jacob*, *Joseph*, *Job*, *David*, *Daniel*, *John*, *Paul*, &c. they were all famous for holiness, and accordingly they had a famous presence of God with them, as hath been shewed in part, and might more fully have been discovered, but that the press calls upon me to hasten to a conclusion; and therefore I shall now but hint at things, consider;

Ponder upon these Scriptures, Isa. 58. 8, 9, 10, 11 2 Cor. 6. 16, 17, 18. Cap. 7. 1. Deut. 23. 13, 14.

First, That the more holy any person is, the more excellent that person is, all corruptions are diminutions

of

of excellency; the more mixt any thing is, the more abased it is; the more you mix your wine with water, the more you abase your wine; and the more you mix your gold with tin, the more you abase your gold: But the purer your wine is, the richer and better your wine is; and the purer your gold is, the more glorious and excellent it is; so the purer and holier any person is, the more excellent and glorious that person is. Now the more Divinely excellent, and glorious any person is, the more he is beloved of God; and the more he is the delight of God, and the more he shall have of the presence of God. Consider

Dan. 9. 23.

Secondly, The more holy any person is, the more that person pleases the Lord: Fruitfulness in holiness fills Heaven with joy; the Husbandman is not so much pleased with the fruitfulness of his fields, nor the Wife with the fruitfulness of her womb, as God is pleased with the fruitfulness of his People in grace and holiness. Now certainly the more God is pleased with any person, the more he will be present with that person; they commonly have most of our presence, that most please us. *Enoch* had this testimony, before his translation, that he pleased God, or gave God content, as the original word εὐηρεστηκέναι imports. *Enoch* eyed God at all times, in all places, and in all companies, and this pleased God: Where ever *Enoch* was, his eye was still upon God. *Enoch* walked constantly with God, his whole life was but one continued day of walking with God, and this pleased God. *Enoch* kept himself from the corruptions and pollutions of the times, which were very great; he was not carried away with the stream of the times, he kept a constant counter-motion to the corrupt courses of the times, and this pleased God. *Enoch* maintained and kept up a clear, choice, and standing communion with God, and this pleased God. *Enoch* made it his business, his work, his Heaven to approve his heart to God, and his wayes to God, and this pleased God. *Enoch* was very serious, and studious to avoid every thing that

Heb. 11. 5. Genes. 5. 24. The Hebrew word וַיִּתְהַלֵּךְ from הִתְהַלֵּךְ is in *Hithpael*, and notes a continual walking with God without ceasing.

that might be a diſhonour to God, or diſpleaſing to God, and this pleaſed God. *Enoch* had great, and high, and honourable thoughts of God, and this pleaſed God. God was ſo pleaſed and taken with *Enoch*, that he tranſlates him from Earth to Heaven, from a gracious to a glorious preſence. It was a ſingular mercy for God to be with *Enoch* on Earth, but it was a far more glorious mercy for *Enoch* to be with God in Heaven. The gracious preſence of God is very deſirable, but the glorious preſence of God is moſt comfortable. *Enoch* pleaſes God, and God tranſlates *Enoch*: We can never have thoſe Friends near enough to us, who take a pleaſure and delight to pleaſe us; So here, *Enoch* was a bright morning Star, a riſing Sun for vertue and holineſs; and therefore God could not ſatisfie himſelf (to ſpeak after the manner of men) that he ſhould live at ſo great a diſtance from him, and therefore tranſlates him from Earth to Heaven. Well my Friends, the greater meaſures of holineſs you reach too, the more you will pleaſe God; and the more you pleaſe God, the more you ſhall be ſure to enjoy of the preſence of God. Conſider

God took him up in a whirl wind, ſay the Hebrew Doctors, as *Elias* was; he changed his place but not his company, for he ſtill walked with God as on Earth ſo in Heaven.

Thirdly, The more holy any perſon is, the more like to God he is; and the more like to God he is, doubtleſs the more he is beloved of God; it is likeneſs both in nature and grace that alwayes draws the ſtrongeſt love: Though every Child is the Father multiplied, the Father of a ſecond Edition; yet the Father loves him beſt, and delights in him moſt, who is moſt like him, and who in ſeature, ſpirit, and action does moſt reſemble him to the life; and ſo does the Father of Spirits alſo, he alwayes loves them beſt who in holineſs reſemble him moſt. There are four remarkable things in the beloved Diſciple, above all the reſt: 1. That he lay neareſt to Chriſt's boſom at the Table. 2. That he followed Chriſt cloſeſt to the high Prieſts Palace. 3. That he ſtood cloſe to Chriſt when he was on the Croſs, though others had baſely deſerted him, and turned their backs upon him. 4. That Chriſt commended the care of his

1 Pet. 1. 15, 16. Levit. 11. 44. Cap. 19. 2. and 20. 7.

Heb. 12. 9.

John 13. 23. Cap. 18. 16. Cap. 19 26, 27. Mark 14. 50.

Virgin Mother to him. Now, why did Chriſts deſire, love, and delight run out with a ſtronger and a fuller tide towards *John*, than to the reſt of the Diſciples? doubtleſs it was becauſe *John* did more reſemble Chriſt than the reſt, it was becauſe *John* was a more exact picture, and lively repreſentation than the others were. Now the more any man in holineſs is like to Chriſt, the more any man in holineſs reſembles Chriſt, the more that man ſhall enjoy of the preſence of Chriſt, the more that man ſhall lay in the boſom of Chriſt. The Father loves to be moſt with that Child that is like him moſt: So here, As ever you would enjoy the preſence of God in your greateſt troubles, deepeſt diſtreſſes, and moſt deadly dangers, be ſure that you keep up holineſs in your hearts and lives, be ſure that you grow in holineſs, and flouriſh in holineſs, and then you ſhall be ſure of the preſence of God with you, in all your troubles, and deep diſtreſſes: A holy God will never leave the holy Chriſtian; and thus much for this uſe of Exhortation.

The laſt uſe of all, is a uſe of comfort and conſolation to all the People of God, in their greateſt troubles, and deepeſt diſtreſſes. Now here conſider

Iſa. 43. 2. Pſalm 91. 15. Joſh. 1. 5. Heb. 13. 5. Exod. 3. 12.

Firſt of all, That God himſelf hands out this as a rare comfort to his People, in all their troubles, diſtreſſes, and dangers, *viz.* That he will be graciouſly preſent with them, in the midſt of all their ſorrows and ſufferings. Geneſ. 26. 3. *Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bleſs thee.* Cap. 28. 15. *And behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goeſt, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee,* &c. Don't talk of thy loſs of Friends, for I will be with thee; nor don't talk of thy Countrey, for I will give thee this Land, which is the Paradiſe of the world; nor don't talk of thy poverty, for thou ſhalt ſpread abroad to the Weſt, and to the Eaſt, and to the North, and to the South. Verſe 14. Nor don't talk of thy ſolitarineſs and aloneneſs, *for I will not leave thee.* Iſa. 91. 10. *Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not*

diſ-

diſmayed, for I am thy God; I will ſtrengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteouſneſs. Suppoſe a man was injuriouſly dealt with, by this man or that, would it not be a comfort to him that a juſt and righteous Judge ſtood by, and was an eye witneſs of all the violences that were offered to him? Suppoſe a man were in exile with *David*, or in priſon with *Joſeph*, or in a Dungeon with *Jeremiah*, or in the ſtocks with *Paul* and *Silas*, or in baniſhment (for the teſtimony of Jeſus) with *John*, yet would it not be a ſingular comfort to him, to have the preſence of a kind Father, a boſom Friend, a wiſe Counſeller, an able Phyſician with him? O Chriſtian, be thou in what place thou wilt, and with what Company thou wilt, and in what condition thou wilt, yet thy loving God, thy kind Father, thy boſom Friend, *&c.* will be ſtill with thee, he will never leave thee, nor forſake thee; and O! what a ſpring of comfort ſhould this be to thee! But

Secondly, Know for your comfort, that there is alwayes ſome ſpecial favours and bleſſings annexed to this ſignal preſence of God, as *I will be with thee, and bleſs thee.* Geneſ. 26. 3. *I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goeſt.* Geneſ. 28. 15. *I will be with him in trouble, and honour him.* Pſalm 91. 15. *I will be with him, and ſtrengthen him.* Iſai. 41. 10. *I will be with thee, and the flames ſhall not kindle upon thee.* Cap. 43. 2. *I will be with thee, and there ſhall not a man be able to ſtand before thee.* Joſhua 1. 5. *I will be with thee, to deliver thee.* Jerem. 1. 19. *I am with thee, to ſave thee, and to deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and out of the hand of the terrible.* Cap. 15. 20, 21. *Huſhai*'s preſence with *David* was a burden, *Jobs* Wifes preſence was but a vexation unto him, and Chriſts preſence among the *Gergeſens* was a terrour to them, and the preſence of talkative Friends is many times a trouble to us. O but this ſignal, this favourable preſence of the Lord with his People, in their greateſt troubles, and deepeſt di-

2 Sam. 15. 33. Job 2. 9. 10. and Matth. 8. 28. 34.

ſtreſſes, is a ſweet preſence, a comfortable preſence, a delightful preſence, a bleſſed preſente, yea ſuch a preſence as has many ſingular bleſſings annexed to it. But

Thirdly, Know for your comfort, that you ſhall have mercy and kindneſs, and what ever good you need in due ſeaſon, at that very inſtant, at that very nick of time wherein you moſt need mercy. God will time your mercies, and your bleſſings for you, he is nigh and will not fail you at a dead lift. When *Abraham* had bound his Son, and bent his ſword, and the knife was up, then comes a voice from Heaven: *Abraham, Abraham* hold thy hand. At that very nick of time when the four hundred and thirty years were expired, *Iſrael* was delivered out of their captivity and ſlavery. *Deut.* 11. 14. *I will give you the rain of your land in his due ſeaſon, the firſt rain, and the latter rain, that thou mayeſt gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oyl.*] God gives rain to all by a Providence, but he gives rain to his *Iſrael* by vertue of a promiſe: God engages himſelf not only to give rain, but to give it in due ſeaſon; he will give the firſt rain after the ſowing of the ſeed, that it might take rooting in the Earth; and he will give the latter rain a little before Harveſt, that the ears might be full: O my Friends! it is wonderful mercy, that God will time our mercies for us. When *Jehoſhaphat* was put to a hard pinch, at that very nick of time God ownes him, ſtands by him, and gives him a great victory. When *David* was at a great plange, *Saul* being at his very heels, at that very nick of time, tydings were brought to *Saul*, that the *Philiſtines* had invaded the land, and ſo *David* eſcapes: When all humane help failed, God came in and help't at a dead lift. So *Julian* was cut of by the Perſian War, at that very nick of time when he had vowed at his return, to make a Sacrifice of the Chriſtians lives. And ſo *Charles* the Fifth was diverted from perſecuting of the Proteſtants, by the Turks breaking into *Hungary*, at that very nick of time when his heart was ſet upon a warm

Pſalm 145. 18. Deut. 4. 7. Gen. 22. 10, 11, 12, 13.

Exod. 12. 41. 51.

Acts 14. 18. Job 38. 26.

2 Chron. 20. 12. 22, 23, 24, 25, 26.

1 Sam. 23. 26, 27, 28.

Let him (ſaith *Auguſtin.*) chuſe his own opportunity that ſo freely grants the mercy.

warm perſecution. And ſo Juſtice *Gilford*, a violent Papiſt in Queen *Marie*'s dayes, going up the ſtairs to Miſtriſs *Roberts* her Chamber, to compel her, will ſhe or will ſhe not, to go to Maſs, at that very nick of time he was ſuddenly taken with his old diſeaſe the Gout, and ſo grievouſly tormented, that he ſwore he would never trouble her more. When *Faux* was giving fire to the match, that ſhould have given fire to the Powder, that ſhould have blown up King, Lords, and Commons, at that very nick of time, he that never ſlumbers nor ſleeps, prevented him; and ſo turned our intended Funeral into a Feſtival. O Chriſtian! are thy troubles many in number, ſtrange in nature, heavy in meaſure, much in burthen, and long in continuance, yet remember that thy God is near, whoſe mercies are numerous, whoſe wiſdom is wonderous, and whoſe power is miraculous. The nearneſs or remoteneſs of a Friend is very material and conſiderable in our troubles, diſtreſſes, wants, dangers, *&c.* I have ſuch a Friend, and he would help me, but he lives ſo far off: And I have another Friend that has a great love for me, that is able to counſel me, and to ſpeak a word in ſeaſon to me, and that in my diſtreſs would ſtand cloſe to me, but he is ſo remote. I have a ſpecial Friend, that did he know how things ſtand with me, would make my burdens his, and my wants his, and my ſorrows his; but he is in a far Countrey, he is at the *Indies*, and I may be undone before I can hear from him. But it is not thus with you, O Chriſtians! who have a God ſo nigh unto you, who have the ſignal preſence of God in the midſt of you, yea who have a God alwayes ſtanding by you. *The Lord ſtood by me*, &c. O my Friends, how can you want comfort, that have the God of all conſolation preſent with you? How can you want counſel, that have the wonderful Counſeller ſo near unto you? How can you want grace, who have the God of all grace ſtanding by you? How can you want Peace, who have alwayes the preſence of the Prince of Peace with you? But.

Acts and Mon. 1880.

Pſal. 121, 3, 4, 5.

2 Cor. 1. 3. Iſa. 9. 6. 1 Pet. 5. 10. Iſa. 9. 6.

Fourth-

God holdeth the Churches Enemies in chains, having his hook in their nose, and his bridle in their lips, *Isa.* 37. 29. he can easily rule and overrule his proudest Enemies.

Fourthly, Know for your comfort, that if God be with you, there is nothing, there can be nothing but weakness against you. *Isa.* 27. 4. *Who would set the briars and thorns against me in battel, I would go through them, I would burn them together?* What are briars and thorns to a devouring fire, to the consuming flames? no more are all the Enemies of the Church to the presence of God with his People: God will be a burning and destroying fire to all the Enemies of *Zion*; wicked men are chaff: *Psalm* 1. 1. *And what is that to the wind, to the whirl wind? they are stubble.* Job 21. 18. *They are as driven stubble to his bow.* Isai. 41. 2. *They are as stubble fully dry.* Nahum. 1. 10. *They are as stubble before the flame.* Joel 2. 5. *They are like dust.* 2 Kings 13. 7. *Yea like small dust.* Isa. 29. 5. *They are like a morning cloud, an early dew, a little smoak.* Hosea 13. 3. *The morning cloud is soon dispelled, the early dew is soon dried up, the rowling smoak out of the chimney is presently scattered.* O the weakness of man! O the power of God! No People on Earth have such a power on their sides as the Saints have, consult these Scriptures, 2 *Kings* 6. 16. 2 *Chron.* 32. 6, 7. *Isai.* 8. 9, 10. *Numb.* 13. 28, 30, 31, 32, 33. *Cap.* 14. 9. No Christian can look upon the strong and mighty Enemies of *Zion* in a Scripture glass, but must behold them as weak and impotent Persons: Who could but smile to see weak Children to attempt to besiege a wall of brass, or a wall of fire? as great a folly and weakness it is for wicked men to make attempts upon the Saints, who have been to this day, and will be to the end, a trembling and a burdensome stone to all that gather together against them. Sense looks upon the Powers of the world as strong, mighty, and invincible; but Faith looks upon them as poor, weak, contemptible, gasping, dying Men. Thus heroical *Luther* look'd upon them: *Contemptus est a me Romanus & favor & furor, I care neither for Romes favour nor fury*; I am neither fond of the one, nor afraid of the other. It is dangerous to look upon the Powers of the world in the Devils multiplying

Zach. 2, 5.

Cap. 12. 2, 3.

plying glaſs; it is beſt and ſafeſt to look upon them in a Scripture glaſs, and then we ſhall never fear them, nor ſinfully ſhift them. But

Fifthly, If God be ſignally preſent with his People, in their greateſt troubles, deepeſt diſtreſſes, and moſt deadly dangers, then know for your comfort, that none can be againſt you but they muſt be againſt God himſelf; for God is with you in all your troubles, as a Father is with his Child, a Husband with his Wife, a General with his Army, and as a Confederate with his Allies, who is with them offenſively and defenſively; hence they are ſaid to rage againſt God, *Iſa.* 37. 28, 29. And to blaſpheme God, 2 *Kings* 19. 3, 6. And to fight againſt God, *Acts* 5. 38, 39. To fight againſt God, is labour in vain; who ever fought againſt God, and proſpered? Some think that this Phraſe of fighting againſt God, is drawn from the Fable of the Gyants, which were ſaid to make war with the Gods. The Church of Chriſt alwayes flouriſheth moſt, and increaſeth moſt, when the Tyrants of the Earth oppoſe it moſt, and perſecute it moſt. *Diocletian* laid down the Empire in great diſcontent, becauſe he could not by any perſecution ſuppreſs the true Chriſtian Religion; the more violent he was againſt the People of God, the more they increaſed and multiplied, and the more they were emboldned and encouraged; and therefore in a rage he throws up all. But

Acts 9. 4, 5, 6.

See Acts 23. 9. Prov. 21. 30.

Exod. 1. 12, 1.

Sixthly, If the ſignal preſence of God be with his People, in their greateſt troubles, deepeſt diſtreſſes, and moſt deadly dangers, then know for your comfort, that there is no preſence like this preſence, no preſence to the preſence of God; let me evidence this by an induction of ſix particulars briefly thus: For Firſt, It is the preſence of an Almighty God. *Geneſ.* 17. 1. *I am the Almighty God, walk before me, and be thou perfect.* Some derive the word *Shaddai*, here uſed from *dai*, that ſignifieth *ſufficiency*. God is an all-ſufficient good, and a ſelf-ſufficient good, he is an Independent good, an abſolute good

Geneſ. 49. 25. Numb. 24. 4.

good, an original good, an universal good; some derive the word *Shaddai* from *Shad*, that signifieth *a breast*, *a dug*, because God feedeth his Children with sufficiency of all good things, as the loving Mother doth the Child with the milk of her breasts. God is the only satisfactory good, and proportionable good, and sutable good to our souls; as the breast, the dug is the most sutable good to the Childs stomach: And others derive the word *Shaddai* from *Shadad*, which signifieth *to spoil*, *conquer*, *or overcome*, and so they say, that God did here invert or overcome the order of nature, in causing the barren to bear: But most Authors do translate it Omnipotent; God then is called *Shaddai*, that is omnipotent and all-sufficient, for his omnipotency includeth also all-sufficiency. Secondly, you have the presence of a loving God with you. *Isa.* 43. 4. *Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee.* But that this may the better stick and work, you must remember, First, that God loves you with a first love. 1 *John* 4. 19. *We love him because he first loved us.* Our love is but a reflex of his. God first cast an eye of love upon us, before we cast an eye of love on him, and therefore God is no way indebted to us for our love. *Mary* answers not *Rabboni*, till Christ first said unto her *Mary*. The pure nature of love is more seen in Gods first love to us, than in ours to him; by nature we were without God, and afar of from God, we were strangers to God, and enemies to God, yea haters of God; and therefore if God had not loved us firstly, we had been undone everlastingly. Secondly, As God loves you with a first love, so he loves you with a free love. *Hosea* 14. 4. *I will heal their back-sliding, I will love them freely:* I know they are back-sliden, but I will heal their back-slidings; I know they have broken their bones by their fall, but I will make those broken bones to rejoyce; I know there is nothing at all in them that is excellent or eminent, that is honourable or acceptable, that is laudable or lovely, yet *I will love them freely*, *Ex mero motu*,

See Deut. 7. 7, 8.

John 20. 16.

Ephes. 2. 12. 19. Rom. 5. 10. Cap. 1. 30.

of

of mine own, free, rich, abſolute, ſoveraign, and independent grace. Thirdly, As he loves you with a free love, ſo he loves you with an everlaſting love. *Jer.*31. 3. *I have loved thee with an everlaſting love: therefore with loving kindneſs have I drawn thee.* Heb. *I love thee with the love of perpetuity*, or with the love of Eternity. My love and my affections continue ſtill the ſame to thee, and ſhall do for ever; or as others carry the words, I love thee with an Ancient love, or with the love of Antiquity; I love thee ſtill with the ſame affection, that in former ages I bare towards thee. Fourthly, As he loves you with an everlaſting love, ſo he loves you with an unchangeable love. *Mal.*3.6. *I am the Lord I change not: therefore ye ſons of Jacob are not conſumed.* Men change, and counſels change, and occurrences change, and Friends change, and Relations change, and Kingdoms change, and Common-wealths change; but God never changes, as *Balaam* confeſſes, who was the Devils Hackney, and who had a mind to dance with the Devil all day, and then ſup with Chriſt at night. God is neither falſe nor fickle, he cannot like men ſay and unſay, he can not alter his mind nor eat his words. [*The Eternity of Iſrael cannot lie nor repent, for he is not a man that he ſhould repent.*] Men are ſo mutable and changeable that there is no hold to be taken of what they ſay; but God is immutable in his nature, in his eſſence, in his counſels, in his attributes, in his decrees, in his promiſes, *&c.* He is (as the School-men ſay) *Omninò immutabilis, Altogether immutable.* Fifthly, As he loves you with an unchangeable love, ſo he loves you with a ſpecial love, with a peculiar love, with a diſtinguiſhing love, with a ſuperlative love. The Lord executes judgment for the oppreſſed, he gives food to the hungry, he looſeth the Priſoners, he opens the eyes of the blind, he raiſes them that are bowed down, he loveth the righteous, and this is more than all the reſt. Sixthly, and laſtly, As he loves his People with a ſpecial love, with a peculiar love, ſo he loves them with the greateſt love

Numb. 3.19.

Pſalm 89. 34.

1 Sam. 15. 29.

Pſalm 146.7,8

with a matchleſs love." [*O Daniel greatly beloved.*] John 3. 16. *God ſo loved the world*, &c. Here is a *ſic* without a *ſicut*; there being nothing in nature wherewith to parallel it: This *ſic* without a *ſicut*, ſignifies the greatneſs of Gods love, the vehemency of his love, and the admirableneſs of his love. Now what an unſpeakable comfort muſt this be to his Saints, to have the preſence of a loving God, to have the preſence of ſuch a loving God with them, in all their troubles and deep diſtreſſes? If the preſence of a loving Friend, a loving Relation in our troubles and diſtreſſes be ſuch a mercy, O! what then is the preſence of a loving God. Thirdly, It is the preſence of an active God, who will be a defence to you, a Shield to you, a Sword to you, a Buckler to you, a Sun to you, a ſtrong Tower to you, a Salvation to you; none can withſtand him, none can equal him, none can out act him. Fourthly, It is the preſence of a wakeful God, of a watchful God, of a God that never, no never ſlumbers or ſleeps; God will be ſo far from ſleeping that he will not ſo much as ſlumber. *Pſalm* 121. 3,4,5. The Phraſe is taken from watchmen, who ſtand on the walls in time of war, to diſcover the approaches of Enemies and accordingly give warning; Now watchmen have been treacherous and ſleepy. The Capitol of *Rome* had been taken by the Gaules, if the Geeſe had not been more wakeful then the watchmen of the walls. *Iphicrates* the Athenian Captain viſiting the Guards on the walls of *Corinth*, found one of the watch aſleep, and preſently thruſt him thorough with his ſword, ſaying: Dead I found him, and dead I left him; though watchmen ſlumber and ſleep, yet that God that is preſent with his People doth neither, his ſeven eyes are alwayes open. Fifthly, It is the preſence of a wiſe God, of an omniſcient God; God fills all things, he encompaſſeth all things, and he ſuſtaineth all things, and therefore he muſt needs know all things. God can find *Jonah* in the bottom of the ſhip; and *Jeroboam*'s Wife in her diſguiſes; and *Judas* in his Treaſon, and *Demas* in his Apoſtacy; and

Pſalm 18. 2.
2 Chron. 16. 9.
Prov. 18. 10.
Jer 32. 40, 41.
Iſa. 30. 18, 19.
Iſa. 27. 3.
Jer. 1. 18.

Ezech. 3. 9.
Pſalm 33. 10, 11.
Ie. 46. 10.
Cap. 40. 28.
Rom. 11. 33.
2 Pet. 2. 9.
Jonah 1. 5.
1 Kings 14. 6
Matth. 26. 24, 25

and the Scribes and Phariſees in their hypocriſie. The whole world is to him as a Sea of glaſs: *Corpus diaphanum, A clear tranſparent body*; there is nothing hid from his eyes, ſo that he that can but find out a place where God ſees not, there let that man ſin and ſpare not. *All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do*; γυμνὰ, *naked*, as when the skin is pulled off, and τετραχηλισμένα, *opened as the entrails of a Sacrifice*, cut down the back. The Apoſtle, ſay ſome, uſeth a Metaphor taken from a ſheep, whoſe skin is taken off, and he hanged up by the neck, with his back towards the wall, and all his entrailes laid bare and expoſed to open view. He alludes, ſay others, to the Anatomizing of a Creature, wherein men are very cautious to find out every little vein or muſcle, though they be never ſo cloſe. They are naked, therefore God ſees their outſide, and opened, diſſected, quartered, and cleft aſunder through the back-bone, ſo that he ſees their inſide alſo. Opened is more than naked; naked is that which is not cloathed or covered; opened is that whoſe inwards are diſcovered, and made conſpicuous. Some make it a Metaphor, from thoſe that lie with their faces upwards, that all Paſſengers may ſee who they are. Is it of ſuch a comfort to have the preſence of a wife, and knowing friend with us, in our greateſt troubles, and deepeſt diſtreſſes; what a tranſcendent comfort muſt it be, to enjoy the preſence of an all-ſeeing, and an all-knowing God, in all our troubles and diſtreſſes. The eye of Heaven ſees all, and knows all, and writes down all thy troubles and trials, thy ſorrows and ſufferings, thy loſſes and croſſes; and accordingly will an all-knowing God act for his own glory and his Peoples good. Sixthly and laſtly, It is the preſence of a God of Mercy, a God of Bowels, a God of compaſſions. *Jer.* 31.18,19, 20. *Hoſea* 11.8,9. *Lament.* 3.22. His compaſſions fail not. Mercy is as eſſential to God as light is to the Sun, or as heat is to the fire: He delights in mercy, as the ſenſes and faculties of the ſoul do in their

2 Timoth. 4. 10. Matth. 23. Rev. 4. 6. Heb. 4. 13.

Matth. 6. 32.

Exod. 33. 7. 8.

Micha 7. 18, 19.

ſeveral actions: Patience and clemency, and mercy, and compaſſion, and peace are the fruits of his bowels, the offſpring which the Divine Nature doth produce; Gods compaſſions are Fatherly compaſſions, *Pſalm* 103. 13. They are Motherly compaſſions, *Iſa.* 49. 15. They are Brotherly compaſſions, *Heb.* 2. 12. They are Friendly compaſſions, *Cant.* 5. 1, 2. O how ſweet muſt the preſence of a God of mercy, a God of compaſſion be to the Saints in a day of trouble? the preſence of a compaſſionate Friend in a day of diſtreſs, is very deſirable and comfortable; what then is the preſence of a compaſſionate God? Thus you ſee that there is no preſence to the Divine preſence, no preſence to the ſignal preſence of God with his People, in their greateſt troubles and deepeſt diſtreſſes. But

Seventhly and laſtly, If God be ſignally preſent with his People, in their greateſt troubles and deepeſt diſtreſſes, then let them all know for their comfort, that this preſence will make up the want or loſs of all outward comforts, this preſence will make up the loſs of a Husband, a Child, a Friend, an Eſtate, *&c.* Look as all light meets in the Sun, and as all water meets in the Sea, ſo all our outward comforts meet in the God of all comfort. When *Alexander* asked King *Porus*, being then his Priſoner, how he would be uſed? He anſwered in one word, Βασιλικῶς, *i. e. like a King*: *Alexander* again replying, Do you deſire nothing elſe? No, ſaith *Porus*, all things are in Βασιλικῶς, in this one word, *like a King*; ſo all things, all comforts are to be found in this ſignal preſence of God with his People, in their greateſt troubles and deepeſt diſtreſſes; certainly the gracious preſence of the Lord is infinitely better than the preſence of all outward comforts, as you know one Sun is more glorious and comfortable than ten thouſand Stars.

1 Sam. 1. 8.

2 Cor. 1. 3.

Quer. But how may a perſon that has loſt this gracious preſence of God, recover it again?

Reſpon. Firſt, Obſerve how you loſt this preſence of God, and labour to recover it by a contrary courſe; did you loſe it by

by ſinful omiſſions, then be more active in a way of duty. Didſt thou loſe the preſence of God by neglecting thy watch, or by not walking with God, or by an eager purſuit of the world, or by cloſing with this or that temptation, or by letting fall thy communion with God; take a contrary courſe, now keep up thy watch, walk cloſe with God, keep up a daily converſe with lively Chriſtians, let thy heart and affections be ſet upon things above, keep thy ground in the face of all temptations, maintain a ſtanding communion with God. After Chriſt had ſtood knocking and calling to his Spouſe [*Open to me my Siſter, my Love, my Dove, my Undefiled, for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night*, Cant. 5. 2, 3, 6.] but found no entrance, he retired and withdrew himſelf, becauſe ſhe would not ariſe, and put on her coat; but when ſhe beſtirs her ſelf, *ſhe finds him whom her ſoul loved*, Cant 3. 1, 2, 3, 4. Then Chriſt comes into his garden again, and returns to his Spouſe again, and forgets all former unkindneſs, *Cap.* 6. 1, 2. But,

Pſal. 119. 63. Col. 3. 1, 2.

Secondly, Enquire where, when, and why God has withdrawn himſelf, as we do when dear Friends abſent themſelves from us, *O the hope of Iſrael, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, why ſhouldeſt thou be as a ſtranger in the Land, and as a way-faring man that turneth aſide to tarry for a night?* Verſe 9. *Why ſhouldeſt thou be as a man aſtonied, as a mighty man that cannot ſave? Yet thou, O Lord, art in the midſt of us, and we are called by thy Name, leave us not.*

Thirdly, Stand not with Chriſt for any thing, not for a right eye, or a right hand, nor for an *Iſaac* or a *Benjamin*, don't ſay this work is too high, and that too hard, and t'other too hot, and the other too dangerous, in order to the recovery of Gods countenance and preſence, thou muſt not think any thing in the world too much to do for Chriſt, or to ſuffer for Chriſt; thou wilt be a happy man if thou canſt recover Chriſts loſt preſence, though it be upon the hardeſt termes imaginable. But,

Fourthly,

Fourthly; Let your hearts lye humble and low under the loss of Gods gracious presence: For, 1. 'Tis the greatest loss. 2. 'Tis a loss imbittering loss, it is a loss that will greatly imbitter all your worldly losses; I have lost my health, I have lost a hopeful Child, I have lost a gracious yoke-fellow, which was the delight of mine eyes and the joy of my heart, I have lost a fair estate, I have lost an intimate Friend, I have lost a brave trade: O but that which imbitters all my losses and puts a sting into them, is this, that I have lost the gracious presence of God, that once I enjoyed. 3. 'Tis a loss that all outward comforts can never make up; when the Sun is down, nothing can make it day with us. 4. 'Tis an invisible loss, and no losses to invisible losses as there are no mercies to invisible mercies, so there are no losses to invisible losses. 5. 'Tis a loss that will cost a man dear before it will be made up again. O the sighs, the groans, the strong cryes, the earnest prayers, the bottles of tears, that the recovery of the Divine presence will cost a Christian, upon all which accounts, how well does it become a Christian to lye humble at the foot of God!

Psal. 51. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. 1 Pet. 5. 6.

Fifthly, Lift up a mighty cry to Heaven: Thus the Saints of old have done: consult these Scriptures, *Psal.* 51. 6. to 13. *Lam.* 3. 56, 57. *Psal.* 4. 6, 7. *Psal.* 27. 9. *Psal.* 38. 21, 22. *Psal.* 138. 3. *Psal.* 119. 8. *O forsake me not utterly*; Christ was forsaken for a few houres, *David* for a few months, and *Job* for a few years, for the tryal and exercise of his faith and patience; but then they all sent up a mighty cry to Heaven: Leave them, God did to their thinking, but forsake them he did in regard of vision, but not in regard of union. The promise is, that *God will draw near to us if we draw near to him*, Jam. 4. 8. Draw nigh to God in duty, and he will draw nigh to you in mercy; Sanctify him, and he will satisfie you. Prayer is the only means to supply all defects, it gets all, and makes up the loss of all, as a gracious poor women said in her distress, I have no Friend, but I have prayer, that

Suidas saith, *Job* was clouded and to his sense and feeling forsaken seven years; But you are not bound to make this an Article of your Faith.

that will get favour with my God; so long as I can find a praying heart, God will (I am sure of that) find a pitying heart, and a helping hand. It is not the length, but the strength of prayer; it is not the labour of the lip, but the travel of the heart that prevails with God; it is not the Arithmetick of our prayers, how many they are, nor the Rhetorick of our prayers, how eloquent they be, nor the Geometry of our prayers, how long they be, nor the Musick of our prayers, how sweet they be; nor the Logick of our prayers, how methodical they be, that will carry the day with God, it is only fervency, importunity in prayer, that will make a man prevalent with God. Fervent prayer hits the mark, carries the day, and pierceth the walls of Heaven, though like those of *Gaza* made of Brass and Iron. The Child has got many a kiss, and many a hug by crying; if God has withdrawn his presence, the best, the surest, and the readiest way to recover it, is to send up a mighty cry to Heaven. But,

Jer. 29. 12, 13, 14.

Jam. 5. 16, 17. Luk. 18. Isa. 45. 2.

Sixthly, Be sure you don't take up your rest in any Creature, in any comfort, in any contentment, in any worldly enjoyment. When the presence of God is withdrawn from you, say as *Absalom*, *What is all this to me, so long as I am banished my Fathers presence, so long as I can't see the Kings face.* When the Mother sees that the Child is taken with the baby, the rattle, the fiddle, she comes not in sight: If you take up your rest in any of the babies, in any of the poor things of this world, God will certainly keep out of sight, he will never honour them with his countenance and presence, who take up in any thing below himself, below his favour, below his presence. I have read of a devout Pelgrim, who going up to *Jerusalem*, was very kindly and nobly entertained in several places but still he cryed out, O but this is not *Jerusalem*, this is not *Jerusalem!* So when you cast your eye upon this Creature, or that, O then cry out, This is not the presence of God, this is not the presence of God; & when you begin to be tickled & taken

Jer. 50. 6.

2 Sam. 14. 24, 28, 32, 33.

taken with this and that enjoyment, with this or that contentment, O then remember, this is not the preſence of God, this is not the preſence of God! Here is a gracious yoke-fellow, here are hopeful Children, here is a pleaſant habitation, here is brave air, here is a gainful trade, *&c.* but what are all theſe to me, ſo long as my Sun is ſet in a cloud, and God has withdrawn his preſence from me? Remember this once for all, that the whole world is but a barren wilderneſs, without the countenance and preſence of God. But,

Pſal. 63. 1,2,3.

Seventhly and laſtly, Patiently and quietly wait upon him in the way of his Ordinances for the recovery of his preſence. Conſult the Scriptures in the margin: Here God dwells, here he walks, here he makes known his glory, here he gives forth his love, here he vouchſafes his preſence; when God is withdrawn your great buſineſs is to prize Ordinances, and to keep cloſe to ordinances, till God ſhall be pleaſed to lift up the light of his countenance, and vouchſafe his preſence to you; you will never recover the Divine preſence by neglecting ordinances, nor by ſlighting ordinances, nor by turning your back upon ordinances, nor by entertaining low thoughts of ordinances. He that thinks ordinances to be needleſs things concludes, 1. That the taking away of the Kingdom of Heaven from the Jews was no great judgment. 2. That the beſtowing of it upon other People is no great mercy. If God be gone, 'tis good to lay at the pool till he returns: There are many dear Chriſtians who have loſt their God for a time, but after a time they have found him again in the way of his ordinances; and therefore let no temptation draw thee off from ordinances, ſay, here I will live, here I will lie, here I will wait at the pool of ordinances, till the Lord ſhall return in mercy to my ſoul.

Exod. 20.24. Mat. 18.20. Iſa. 64.5. Pſal. 27 4. Pſal. 65. 4. Revel. 2. 1. Pſal. 40,1,2,3. Iſa. 8. 17. Mich. 7.7,8,9. Iſa. 26.8,9.

Mat. 21.43. Joh. 5. 2. to 10.

I ſhall follow this Diſcourſe of the Divine preſence with my earneſt prayers, that it may from on high be ſo

ſo ſignally bleſt, as that it may iſſue in the furtherance of the internal and eternal good, both of Writer, Reader, and Hearer.

Thus ends the SECOND PART *of the* Golden Key.

Soli Deo Gloria in Æternum.

FINIS.

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